













Russ. 30 y<sup>b</sup>

Edwards



THE RUSSIANS AT HOME

AND

THE RUSSIANS ABROAD.







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THE RUSSIANS ABROAD:

*SKETCHES, UNPOLITICAL AND POLITICAL,  
OF RUSSIAN LIFE UNDER  
ALEXANDER II.*

BY

H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.

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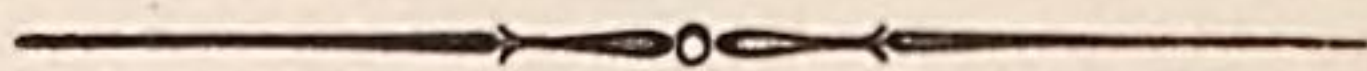
## P R E F A C E .

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A LONG preface is sometimes a worse evil than even a big book ; and the two volumes now offered to the public form a work of rather formidable dimensions. The author has nothing to say about them except that the first volume is wholly unpolitical, and that it consists for the most part of chapters selected, and in many cases abridged, from a book published not many years after the accession of the Emperor Alexander II., under the title of the *Russians at Home* ; while the second volume, which deals with the *Russians*

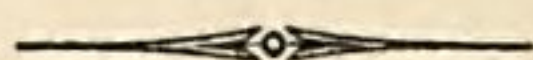


*Abroad* (the Russians are abroad in more than one sense just now), is devoted to political questions, and is intended in particular to show what of late years the action of the Russian Government has been, not only "at home," but also in connection with Poland, with Central Asia, with the Slavonians of the Balkan peninsula, and with Panslavonianism generally. This volume includes a certain number of articles reproduced, with all necessary alterations, from newspapers, magazines, and reviews. The reader will see for himself that they have not been put together at random.





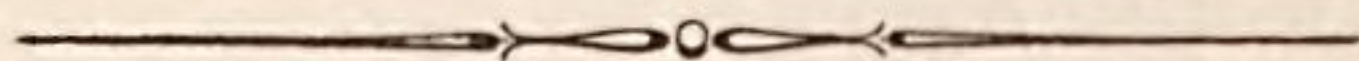
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# THE RUSSIANS AT HOME

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## CHAPTER I.

ST. PETERSBURG ; AND FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO  
MOSCOW.

THE first sight the traveller gets of St. Petersburg is infinitely more beautiful in summer than in winter. In the latter season he approaches it after a tedious, snowy, railway journey through a flat and uninteresting country ; in the former he probably sails towards it on the waters of one of the most beautiful rivers in Europe, and certainly by far the most beautiful of those on which the great capitals are built. Like a great many other fair things, the Neva is not so useful as it is ornamental ; for it is too shallow for the navigation of large vessels, and it has, moreover, the disadvantage of being solid during half the year. Occasionally, too, it inundates the metropolis ; and in every street water-



marks are to be seen, showing the height to which the waves rose during the terrible flood of 1825—which a believer in symbols might regard as correlative with the lamentable insurrection of Pestel that same year. Numbers of the insurgents were sent to Siberia. The waves could not be exiled; but they were imprisoned between two long lines of granite ramparts, which form the most magnificent quays in the world. It is beyond the quays, however, where the Neva disports itself freely, that the beautiful river is seen in all its beauty. Its soft, green banks, which it continually overflows, come down to the very edge of the water; and the water everywhere, even in the heart of the capital, is as clear and transparent as the Seine at Asnières, or the Thames at Twickenham.

The Neva at St. Petersburg is in some parts not unlike the Seine at Paris. Let the Winter Palace, the Hermitage, and the other Imperial mansions in the same line, stand for the Tuileries and the Louvre; the Government buildings on the other side for the Institute, the houses on the Quai d'Orsay, the Palace of the Legion of Honour, &c., and the resemblance will be at once perceived by all who are familiar with the two cities. The Neva, however, is twice as broad as the Seine, and the St. Petersburg quays are in all respects superior to those of Paris.

The golden cupola of a church, strange object in the North, is the first thing that meets the traveller's



eye as he approaches Cronstadt from the Gulf of Finland. Going from Cronstadt up the Neva to St. Petersburg, the first indications he sees of the capital are a long golden spire, like a needle—or, when the sun is shining on it, like the flight of a distant rocket—and a large golden dome, like a balloon. The needle-like spire adorns the Admiralty, the ball of gold is the centre cupola of St. Isaac's Cathedral. For at least half an hour the steeple and the dome are all that can be seen of St. Petersburg. They seem to belong to nothing, and to be floating in the air. And if the appearance of St. Isaac's is marvellous at a distance, it is certainly magnificent to a spectator at a few hundred yards. The exterior is quite worthy of the splendid and elaborate ornamentation of the inside. The immense central dome is surrounded by four small ones on the same model, which form a square. Seen from the other side of the river, when the slanting rays of the evening sun fall upon them, these five golden cupolas assume the most fantastic colours, and are in turns gold, bronze, green, and fire-coloured, like the back of a beetle; while the gold-lettered inscription on the façade glows like pure light.

In sailing up the Neva, almost every building one sees is of present or of historical interest. There is the statue of Peter, for instance, which tells a different story to each beholder. According to Mićkiewicz, it is "an avalanche of despotism," that will some day come



rolling to the ground. Count Joseph de Maistre, the enthusiast for order, and who, writing immediately after the French Revolution, respects Russia as the great conservative Power, is in love with the Neva, but says of the statue, that "Peter is lifting his arm above the city with a gesture which we know not whether to regard as one of menace or protection." Others, of a more prosaic turn of mind, content themselves with telling how the immense block of granite on which the statue stands was hewn out of the Finland quarries, rolled towards the Neva, and borne down the river to St. Petersburg on a raft constructed specially for its reception. Or they will relate the anecdote of the Russian officer who used to gallop his horse to the very edge of a cliff, and suddenly haul him up when his head and neck were already hanging over the precipice; and will explain how the sculptor Falconnet, to whom the feat of the said officer is supposed to have suggested the attitude of the equestrian figure (but who, in fact, copied it from the antique), poured so many tons of molten metal into the legs and haunches of the animal, in order to maintain it in its present erect position. Others tell the story of the foreigner who, having lost his way, got on to the *isvostchik's* horse, and put himself into the attitude of Peter; upon which the intelligent driver at once understood that he was to convey the gentleman to the neighbourhood of the bronze man on horseback. Indeed, this statue says



something to every one, and every one has something to say about the statue.

Ascending the river, we come to the Fortress of Peter and Paul, which stands opposite to the magnificent Winter Palace, on the other bank of the river. The relative position of the Imperial mansion and of the Imperial dungeons has struck many writers, who thereupon remember that "it was not far from the Capitol to the Tarpeian rock." Some, again, see in the fortress the last resting-place of the Tzars (since the time of Peter), and reflect that, in the midst of their power and prosperity, the Russian emperors cannot look from the windows of their palace without beholding their tomb. The French king avoided St. Germain, because from its terrace the spire of the funereal St. Denis was visible; but no such weakness belongs to the sovereigns of Russia. Their St. Denis stares them in the face, and side by side with the church where they hope to repose in peace are the dungeons in which lie those whom some call traitors and others patriots.

Not only is this approach from Cronstadt to St. Petersburg, and the passage along the quays, full of interest; but nearly everything that is beautiful or interesting in St. Petersburg is found on the banks of the Neva. For instance, the Isaac Cathedral, the Winter Palace, the Taurida Palace, the Palace of Marble, the Hermitage, the Exchange, the Admiralty, the Fortress, the Summer Gardens, with the admirable



statue of Kryloff the fabulist in his dressing-gown, the Review Ground, &c. After the quays, the most interesting part of St. Petersburg is the celebrated Nevski Prospect, along which we pass to reach the terminus of the Moscow Railway.

When for the first time I travelled from St. Petersburg to Moscow immense preparations were being made for the coronation of Alexander the Second. The new capital was gradually emptying itself into the old ; and instead of one train, as many as two were despatched daily along the line.

The Moscow houses had all been repainted, and the Moscow beggars, that they might not annoy the visitors, had, with infinite consideration (for the visitors), been imprisoned. At the same time the cost of everything, necessaries as well as luxuries, had risen to such an alarming extent that the Government, in the interest of the working classes, felt called upon to fix the maximum price of beef at threepence a pound : the reader need scarcely be told which were the favourite meats with the proprietors of *tables d'hôte* as long as this curious alimentary edict remained in force. Even the officials in the passport office and in the office of printed books were considerate, and neither delayed the traveller nor confiscated his literary luggage. Those who arrived in St. Petersburg one day could start the day afterwards for Moscow.

The most remarkable thing at the railway station



was this: that, although according to law every one who wished to travel from St. Petersburg to Moscow must show his passport when he purchased his ticket, more than one person who had forgotten or had not had time to get his "papers" put in order, obtained his ticket by simply paying the ordinary price and exhibiting a rouble or half a rouble in addition. Indeed, the amount of cheating and corruption practised in connection with the Moscow and St Petersburg Railway was at that time ludicrous or appalling, according to the disposition of the person witnessing it. I confess that it amused me—at least a great deal of it did; though it was impossible to think of it seriously without disgust, and without some misgiving as to whether the Russians as a mass would ever regard office as anything but an opportunity for extorting money. Sometimes an *employé*, civil or military, wearing the Government uniform, would refuse to pay, on the pretext that he was travelling on State service; or without any pretext at all. At others, a person who had not taken a ticket would give the conductor a rouble or so for the privilege of travelling without one; or with a third-class ticket he would travel in the first-class. Another plan consisted in taking a ticket at the last station and giving it up at the terminus—a permission to travel twenty miles, instead of a permission to travel four hundred and eighty. Of course the conductor of the train found his account in all these swindles, which



took place beneath his eyes, even if he was not a direct and active participator in them.

Materially speaking, there is nothing to be said against the Moscow Railway. The stations, the engine-houses, which with their large Eastern domes look like mosques, the refreshment-rooms along the line, are all commodious, well-constructed buildings. The carriages are constructed on the American plan. Those of the first class are elegant little drawing-rooms, furnished with chairs, tables, sofas, &c. To these, however, the traveller by the first class is not admitted as a matter of course; they are usually taken by families, and parties of friends. It is the second and third class carriages, I believe, that are specially American in their construction. A second-class carriage on the Moscow line is a long saloon, fitted up with "boxes" like a London coffee-room. Down the centre is a passage, and on each side are seven of the said "boxes," each "box" being made for the accommodation of four persons. Thus the carriage has altogether fifty-six seats. At each end is a little platform, which serves as an observatory or station for the guard, and for those who wish to breathe the outer air or to smoke. It is usual to purchase these luxuries with a little bribe of about fourpence—smoking and standing on the platform being strictly forbidden by the railway regulations.

The cost of refreshments at the various stations is moderate, if you take what the Russians take themselves.



You can get excellent tea, with as much cream as you like, for fourpence a tumbler; and biscuits and cakes for what they cost in most other countries. Slices of caviare, cheese, and the awful *butter-brod* of the Germans, are also sold; and fair ordinary Bordeaux costs only a rouble or a rouble and a half a bottle. Dinner, consisting of soup, some more or less national *entrée*, roast meat and salad, one rouble. Breakfast (different kinds of meat, &c.), thirty copeiks—about a shilling. Guinness's Stout and Bass's Ale are found at the chief stations, but you are charged a rouble the quart bottle for these luxuries. The great article of consumption, all along the line, is tea.

It is impossible to travel with greater security than on this Moscow railway. As there are only two passenger trains a day, and a luggage-train twice or three times a week, there is not much danger of a collision. Then there are no tunnels, and no cuttings or embankments sufficiently important to deserve the name. A French lady, who had lived all her life in Russia, and who once travelled in the same diligence with me from St. Petersburg to the Prussian frontier, exclaimed, when she saw near Tilsit a hill-side about fifty feet high, "I have at last seen a mountain!"—and so in a comparative sense she had, for round St. Petersburg, and between St. Petersburg and Moscow, there are not even hillocks. At Valdai, celebrated for its bells, not very far from Moscow, the



Russians pretend that there is a chain of hills. They are not perceptible to the naked eye, though, doubtless, an engineer would discover them. An English engineer, who travelled with me on the Moscow line, was quite charmed with the capabilities of the country for railway construction, in a political as well as in a scientific sense. "No tunnels, no viaducts, no cuttings, no embankments—and above all, no Act of Parliament!" he exclaimed.

One serious inconvenience, however, presented itself in connection with the Moscow line; some of the land being so boggy that in certain spots small forests of logs had to be sunk before the rails could be laid down with any chance of their remaining level. After the wet season, when the water in these bogs expands into ice, the rails are sometimes forced up; and though no serious accident has yet occurred from that cause on the Moscow line, it is not certain that passengers would be equally fortunate in travelling along the lines which it is proposed to construct through the deserts of Siberia, where the number of signal-men engaged would, comparatively speaking, be of course very small.

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## CHAPTER II.

FROM MOSCOW TO ST. PETERSBURG, AND FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO THE PRUSSIAN FRONTIER.

APPROACHING Moscow from St. Petersburg in summer, one finds the temperature getting gradually higher and higher; and when at the end of winter one travels to St. Petersburg from Moscow, a hard frost and clear sunlit atmosphere is left for a half-thaw, a mist, and a perpetual drizzle of sleet and snow. It has often been said that Moscow is more thoroughly Russian than St. Petersburg; and, independently of atmospheric differences, there are many points in which the old and the new capital are unlike one another. In several respects St. Petersburg resembles Berlin far more than Moscow; only it is Berlin on a larger scale, and with a magnificent river flowing through it. There are also a good many more palaces, and grander ones, in the Russian city, to say nothing of its unrivalled quays. But one



of the first things that strikes the traveller in the capital of the north is the rigid, military aspect of the streets, with all the houses drawn up in line, or in columns of companies, or—seen from an eminence—in squares of battalions; and this is just what every one notices in Berlin. In addition, moreover, to the architectural resemblance between Berlin and St. Petersburg, the latter derives a certain Teutonic look from the large number of Germans included in its official and mercantile population, which is increased by the presence of an inevitable portion of Germans in distress; whereas in Moscow, when you “take your walks abroad,” the only poor you see are pilgrim-like beggars in caftan and girdle, with the traditional staff, with shoes of bark and with beards a foot long. In St. Petersburg the ordinary winter costume (except among the *moujiks*) is very much like that of Berlin, and nearly all the men wear hats; in Moscow, a general wearing of hats is a phenomenon which manifests itself simultaneously with a display of full-dress uniforms, and which may be accepted as a sign of a *fête*-day requiring visits to be paid.

St. Petersburg is built on a plain which was once a marsh; Moscow stands on hills. There is nothing characteristically Russian in the fact of a city being erected on uneven ground; but in all the old Russian towns of importance there is a stronghold, or “krem-lin,” built on a commanding point, and one cannot



say that this is replaced in St. Petersburg by the fortress. Then, in St. Petersburg, numbers of the principal churches and cathedrals are not constructed on the old Russo-Byzantine model, but exhibit a compromise between the native or naturalised style and that of Italy since the Renaissance: of the small square churches with gilt, painted, or spangled domes—one principal dome in the centre, with a satellite at each of the four corners—there are but few specimens in the new capital. In Moscow, again, every family in good circumstances has a separate house, which is almost always detached, and surrounded by a garden; whereas, in St. Petersburg, those who do not live in palaces generally content themselves with a “flat,” in the French style. In both cities the old Russian custom still prevails of calling houses after the names of their proprietors; so that on your letters you are addressed in the Oriental style, as “So-and-so, at the house of So-and-so.” But the numbering system is being gradually introduced into St. Petersburg. Finally, the two capitals present a striking contrast in the matter of colour. St. Petersburg is composed of long regular lines of grey; the fantastic Moscow is white or pale yellow, with roofs of dark-red or light-green, varied with cupolas of gold or of bright ultramarine with golden stars.

Magnificent as St. Petersburg had appeared to me seeing it for the first time, it disappointed me the



second time, arriving there from Moscow. However, there was the Italian Opera to see, which had not been open in the summer of the previous year, and which is a magnificent house, though inferior to the unrivalled Moscow Opera House—constructed by the same architect, the late Signor Cavo. I of course made a series of visits to the Gallery of the Hermitage, which possesses Bruloff's "Destruction of Pompeii," and a few other works of merit by Russian artists, together with a marvellous collection of Italian, Flemish, and Dutch paintings—of which the Titians and Rembrandts are especially remarkable, both for their number and for their rare excellence. Here, too, is the wonderful comic series of pictures by Paul Potter (in a style with which, of late years, the name of Grandville has been especially associated), the "Animals sitting in Judgment on Man." Without attempting to give an account of the treasures of the Hermitage Gallery, I may call attention to two seemingly unimportant restorations made during the present reign, which have their significance all the same. Houdon's fine marble bust of Voltaire, of which the bust at the Théâtre Français is a repetition, had been consigned by Nicholas, the great *anti*-"*idéologue*" (who must have had peculiar horror of the many-ideaed author of the "Philosophical Dictionary"), to some lumber-room in the palace; and, from the same motives of propriety which induce the Russian Ministers of Fine Art to dis-



countenance the utter nudity of Academy models, Rembrandt's "Danaë" remarkable for the forcible drawing of the principal figure, had been removed from the public gaze, and could not be seen unless the visitor went through the tedious form of procuring a special permission to view it. Among the first acts of the new reign were the liberation of Voltaire and of Danaë from the dungeons to which they had been consigned.

The Imperial library, with its admirably-arranged catalogue (on the plan of Adelung), is another of the things that must be seen at St. Petersburg. In one of the rooms, enclosed in glass cases, are a variety of manuscript curiosities, the most remarkable of which is the astonishing apophthegm given to Louis XIV. as a boy to write "copies" from—" *Les rois font ce qui leur plait ;*" a notion which he certainly carried out to the best of his ability in after-life. " *J'attends le moman de revoir mes chairs soldats*" is a fine specimen of the young Prince's orthography. Besides many volumes of manuscript by Voltaire, which have never been published, the Hermitage contains the whole of his private library. It was after a careful examination of it that Count de Maistre wrote his remarks concerning Voltaire's characteristic indifference to truth as shown in the numerous incorrect editions of important works studied by him, and annotated in his own hand.

Some of the Imperial manufactories, the School of



Mines—in fact, any or all of the Government institutions in or near St Petersburg—ought also to be visited, if only to see the magnificence of the buildings, and the neatness and order of all the internal arrangements. The State, in Russia, is, as regards some matters, so far ahead of the mass of the people that these establishments have an effect they could not have in any other country ; and it is a fact that the Russian Government not only employs but creates the best high-class workmen in the empire. Some of the “fabrics” are like palaces, and so are other public buildings of a less-dignified character. Thus, one day happening to drive past an edifice with an imposing façade, guarded by beadles of magnificent aspect in the imperial livery, I asked my *isvostchik* the name of the place.

“The Government pawn-office,” he replied.

“You must make a mistake,” I said, flattering myself that I knew the difference between a palace and a pawn-broker’s.

“I ought to know,” returned the man, with a smile, “for I am pledged there myself, with all my family.”

The pawned *isvostchik* was a serf attached to an estate whose proprietor had borrowed money on mortgage from the Government.

Before leaving St. Petersburg I made an expedition along the frozen river to Cronstadt. The thaw was not expected for at least a fortnight, and the ice was about a yard and a half thick—thicker than which it seldom



if ever becomes. On the right—looking upon the river from the palatial side of the stream—the Neva was crossed by the race-course, where renowned trotters, drawing the lightest of sledges, contend. On the other side the ice was in several places broken up, and men were waiting with sledges to carry away enormous transparent lumps, which were arranged in Druidical circles, and which, when the sun illuminated them and brought out their prismatic colours, made the most fantastic Stonehenge imaginable. M. Proudhon, in the celebrated peroration of his celebrated pamphlet, addresses those who have taken exclusive possession of the soil, and calls upon them, with indignant sarcasm, to partition the sea and the light of heaven as they have already partitioned the land. In Russia the frozen waters have actually been made into “property” but it is only the taking possession of it without due authorization that is regarded as “theft.” A contractor holds from Government, or from the municipality of St. Petersburg, the right of selling the ice of the Neva. Once, when the Wenhams Lake supply had failed, a whole cargo was shipped from the nearest open port to London ; but, as a general rule, the sale is confined to St. Petersburg, where almost everyone has an ice-house. The contractors mark off a certain portion of ice, and, with a sharp instrument made for the purpose, cut it into long slices, and divide it again transversely into squares, like a Yorkshire pudding. The blocks, after being lifted out of the



water, are arranged in the manner I have described, and are afterwards sent off one by one to the purchasers, each block being a sufficient load for a sledge drawn by a single horse. There is a regular ice-market on the Neva; and no more thoroughly winter picture can be seen than the sledges returning from it,—the frost-bearded drivers sitting each on his block like statues on pedestals.

There is something truly Arctic in the aspect of the gradually-widening Neva, between St. Petersburg and Cronstadt. After a few miles nothing but ice, with here and there a snowdrift, and at every verst a signal-post, is to be seen. At certain intervals there are stations where the sentinels from time to time, and almost continuously after dusk, ring bells for the guidance of travellers who may have wandered from the proper course; which, after a snow-storm and when the weather is misty, often happens, even in the day-time. The hyperborean character of the scene was added to in one place by an effective “detail”—the skeleton of an unfortunate horse, completely bleached, and as bare as if the flesh had been gnawed from the bones by wolves. However, there is no sort of danger about a sledge journey from St. Petersburg to Cronstadt. Almost the only accidents possible are those which might arise from occasional fissures in the ice, caused, probably, by strong currents, but which, when they are at all wide, are always carefully bridged over.



Halfway between St. Petersburg and Cronstadt is a refreshment-house and tavern, built of wood, and fastened into the ice by means of beams. The foundation is secure enough ; but towards the end of winter the hostelry has rather an unsteady appearance, owing, probably, to the flux and reflux of the tide, which in some places quite destroy the level of the ice. Indeed, at Cronstadt I found every ship in the harbour separated from the ice which surrounded it, and which had to be cut through every morning, to avoid the strain its rise and fall would otherwise have caused to the timbers.

Owing to the early and unexpected appearance of winter, a large number of vessels, of which by far the greater part were English, had been frozen in ; so that Cronstadt, until the thaw, had in many respects the appearance of an English seaport. The names of the hotels and taverns were all painted up in English, more or less correct. The streets were full of English sailors who walked about without fur, without great-coats, without even gloves or goloshes, and with their breasts exposed ; and a large pleasure-garden—the Cronstadt Cremorne—with all its tenements, had been hired by a certain number of them as a place of habitation. In the frozen harbour the long lanes of ships had had London titles given to them ; and I walked down “ Long Acre,” “ High Street,” the “ Commercial Road,” and other icy thoroughfares, bearing names which recalled



to the home-sick seamen the "*arva beata*" of the British metropolis. But what chiefly interested me was, to find that the English sailors, many and uproarious as their jollifications and sprees had been during their half-year's sojourn at Cronstadt, had, at the same time, established schools in the Russian military port both for the ships' boys and for themselves. Of course they were aided in this by the English residents, foremost among whom were the clergymen of the English churches at Cronstadt and at St. Petersburg; but whatever instruction was offered the sailors thankfully accepted; and the Russian Government placed at the disposal of the committee one of its public buildings, in acknowledgment of which the English residents afterwards presented a sum of money to one of the Russian charities. A great deal has been written as to the possibility of taking Cronstadt; but I believe the above to be the only account published of its peaceful occupation by the English during the winter of 1856-57.

The first time I travelled from St. Petersburg to the Prussian frontier was in the days when railways had not yet been generally introduced into Russia; and on a winter evening at the end of March I started on a five days' journey by diligence through the snow.

Travelling in Russia was at that time a very serious matter indeed, and travellers by land, equally with travellers by sea, were well entitled to the prayers of



the faithful. In a long journey the most convenient plan was to take the diligence, which was never kept waiting for horses, except under extraordinary circumstances, such as the passage immediately before of a Government messenger. The advantage of taking your own sledge was that you travelled faster—if the horses were always ready—and that you could stop wherever you pleased ; whereas in going from St. Petersburg or Moscow to Warsaw, or from St. Petersburg to the Prussian frontier, the diligence never stopped except for relays, or because the lumbering vehicle had stuck fast in the snow, or had slipped into some pit at the side of the road, and required additional horses to extricate it.

I must add—and this explains some of the inconveniences of Russian travelling along the high road—that Russians as a rule never stop, when they have once set out on an expedition, until they have reached their journey's end. They want nothing by the roadside except bread and hot water for their tea, which, with other articles of refreshment, they usually carry with them. As a natural consequence of this (it has now become to some extent the cause of the continuance of the system), the station-masters have seldom anything fit to offer to any but the most hungry traveller ; and an Englishman starting from St. Petersburg with English notions of hotel conveniences on the road, was likely to be more and more disappointed at every station until he entered the Polish provinces, when, in some village of



mud peopled by the dirtiest of Polish Jews that Poland and Judea combined could produce, he became desperate at being offered nothing but a piece of black bread and the use of a tea-urn.

I remember that for the hot water and a sight of the black bread the infamous proprietor charged the company of travellers as if each had been liberally supplied with tea and its usual accompaniments. Perhaps he was annoyed that no one tried the strength of his teeth on the curious piece of loaf, which was as hard as a stone, and, but for its costliness, might have been entitled to a place in our "Museum of Economic Geology."

The stations near St. Petersburg were far better than those near the Prussian (once Polish) frontier; and there was a marvellous similarity between all of them until after Riga. The best description that can be given of them is an inventory of the things contained in any one:—four tables, with four candlesticks upon them; three sofas; three benches, with three tea-pots on them; a portrait of the Emperor, a looking-glass, and a list of prices. On entering the room, male travellers were generally attracted by the *carte*; the ladies by the looking-glass.

I should like to give some particulars of the journey from St. Petersburg to Tauroggen; but the incidents, though violent, were not exciting in any but a physical sense, and consisted entirely of falls from ledges of



frozen snow, caused by a recent storm and drift, into hollows on the other side, some six or eight feet deep. At times the diligence, which was of course on rails, seemed in an utterly hopeless position, being, in fact, more than once thrown literally on its beam-ends. But ten horses sufficed to pull it to rights, and to drag it, jolting and leaping elephantine leaps as it went, over great ridges and little ravines, and whatever happened to be in the way. When we reached a station, the conductor, in a polyglot dialect, which well became him as an experienced traveller, would say to the passengers, without regard to their nationality, "Moosieu, tchai trinken ;" which meant that we might get out and have some tea. Everyone got out at every station, except when by some chance a few of the passengers had succeeded in getting to sleep ; and even then the magic formula, "Moosieu, tchai trinken," generally roused them. It must be remembered that the tea was sure to be good and refreshing, while the sleep was always doubtful. For my own part, the only real sleep I obtained was at Riga, where there was a delay of nearly an hour ; but that was the sleep of the top (or *taupe*)—a condensed sleep, from which I woke as from a dream that might have lasted a year.

Once the amiable conductor had an interesting quarrel at one of the stations with a Livonian clergyman, before whom he had omitted to uncover himself,



and who, with a face as red as a turkey-cock, abused him for a good five minutes for his confounded impudence in not paying proper respect to a Christian pastor. There was a German Baron, too, from Riga where the conductor had to take a second diligence under his care, who was starved into affected sociability through not having provided himself with tea before starting on his travels ; and his wife the Baroness, who, indignant at being obliged for some reason or other to travel in a public diligence, consoled herself by abstaining from all intercourse with her fellow-passengers, and by refusing to quit the carriage to sit down with a Polish and a French lady, from whom she, however, contrived to obtain some tea through the ingenuity of her servant and the rapacity of her husband. I can remember, too, innumerable verst-posts, which, in the absence of all scenery except snow, it was quite a pleasure to count ; and black-and-white barriers, marking the boundaries of certain districts, which hung out of the guard-houses across the road like fishing-rods. Then there was a wonderful drive of eighteen miles along a raised road which was mathematically straight—lying evenly between its extreme stations ; and which stood out like a jetty above the sea of snow that surrounded it, and had a lamp like a lighthouse at each end. Finally, at Taurroggen there was a pleasant and quite unexpected meeting with some English bottled stout, which was discovered by a Finnish captain, who said he liked every-



thing English but the English marauding expeditions in the Gulf of Finland, and which was partaken of by everyone except the German Baroness, who preferred standing outside in the frost to entering a kind of tavern where people who travelled in diligences were drinking beer.

The Prussian frontier is marked by a fishing-rod barrier, like those on the Russian roads, except that on the Russian barriers the black-and-white diamond-check is relieved, or perhaps made still uglier, by the addition of a thin red stripe. On the other side stands a sentinel in a helmet and a grey great-coat, a uniform which only differed from that of the Russian line in being a tighter fit. The fields, as in Russia, were still covered with snow; but the snow was melting. In the little reception-room, half café, half custom-house, where the baggage had to be examined, there was, as in the Russian post-houses, a portrait of His Majesty; but we were ten yards from Russia, and *this* Majesty was the King of Prussia. A young lady from St. Petersburg asked innocently whether that was not the portrait of some member of the Imperial family? This caused a laugh, in which the Polish lady heartily joined, for Prussia was not yet supposed to have an independent policy. Coffee and rolls were brought in, and much sensation was caused by the production of a table-cloth as white as the hot milk, and which, when it was spread out on the table, excited murmurs of applause; for during nearly a week we had



not been accustomed to cleanliness. The large-handed Phillises seemed pleased at the effect their entertainment was producing upon the poor Russian savages ; and the Custom-house officer was almost patronizing with his civility, as much as to say, " This is not the sort of thing you are accustomed to on the other side, my poor emancipated serfs. You are now in a civilized country." At last the conductor attached to the "extra-fast-post," took up the idea, and thought he must distinguish himself by a voluntary on the horn. We entered the carriage. The postilion succeeded in playing a tune. He was certainly more of a virtuoso than our Russian friend, who used merely to blow on his bugle a very loud blast, whenever there was occasion to warn the labourers with their carts, or the drovers with their herds, or the workmen who were clearing the road, that he was coming, and that it would be advisable to get out of his way. But when the road was tolerably level, with only a snowdrift here and there, not more than two or three feet high, he would make his horses gallop their ten miles an hour, whereas the cornist of the German "extra-schnell-post" has no notion of any pace beyond an amble. No one need or would get out of his way unless it suited him to do so, and that is why he devotes so much attention to his horn, which he really blows as if horn-playing were his sole business, and the conveyance of passengers from the frontier to Tilsit did not concern him in the least.



If it were not for that parti-coloured barrier, the Russian conductor, even now when the German is halfway to Tilsit, would catch him up long before he reached the city of the treaty.

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## CHAPTER III.

## COMEDY AND CORRUPTION.

THE Russian calendar is twelve days behind ours. How far is Russia behind us in other respects? The question is not answered very easily; for in some things we are centuries ahead, in others only a few years, in others a single season, while in one or two comparatively unimportant matters, such as decimal coinage and extramural cemeteries and slaughter-houses, we have been preceded by the yet undeveloped empire which we are in the habit of styling semi-barbarous. The peasants of Russia are very far indeed behind ours—several centuries, if we may judge by the period of our enfranchisement of the serfs; but they are also far from being in the position of the French peasants before the Revolution. Certainly, no such official cor-



ruption as is to be found in Russia ever existed in England at all. In England, it is true, candidates for parliamentary honours bribe voters; but if there were parliaments in Russia, voters having petitions to present would bribe members. In Russia judges take bribes almost openly, and Russian writers quite openly accuse them of it. The most desperate Chartist and revolutionist in England would not suspect an English judge of such a practice. Nevertheless in Fielding's day, there were magistrates who were guilty of it; and magisterial venality is quite a common subject of jest in Smollett's novels; and there have been periods when even English Ministers of State were not incorruptible. In France, in Beaumarchais' time, it was customary for suitors to pay visits to the members of the tribunal which had to try their cause: this is still the practice in Russia. There were serfs in Prussia until 1811. There were serfs in Hungary until 1848, and, by some accounts, they were worse off than those of any part of Russia. In France, until the Revolution, capital offenders were broken on an iron frame with an iron bar (as described by Mercier in the *Tableau de Paris*), and these executions occurred frequently. In Russia the punishment of the knout was similar to this; but no such punishment has been inflicted since the accession of the present Emperor.

To find the equals of the Russian police we must go back to the alguazils of *Gil Blas*. If a lodger in an hotel



misses anything, and informs the police of his loss, they will make him pay for laying his complaint before them; they will make the hotel-keeper pay for suffering things to be stolen from his hotel; and if they know the thief, they may be at the same time receiving money from *him* in consideration of not taking him into custody. A person of my acquaintance had a book stolen from him, and having traced it to a book-stall, was foolish enough to give the suspected thief into custody. Gladly did the policeman take the thief, gladly did the thief go with the policeman. The loser of the book in the meanwhile had to appear time after time at the Police-office and to give money on each occasion, until at last he was allowed to withdraw his charge, on payment of two roubles. A Frenchman who lived in the principal commercial street of Moscow, assured me that if he caught anyone stealing from his shop (which sometimes happened), he never thought of handing him over to the police. He had done so, he said, too often; for once mixed up with the police, there was no getting rid of them, and to obtain justice was out of the question. "What then do you do with a detected shoplifter?" I asked. "We take him into the room at the back, thrash him, and then kick him out into the street," was the reply. "We know, at all events, we shall not see him again. He is glad to get off so easily—and so are we." This horror of the police is so great, that a Russian will avoid the body of a dead or dying man, lest the alqua-



zils should see him and accuse him of the murder, with a view to extortion. A friend of mine was in the Troitza restaraunt at Moscow one day, when a merchant suddenly fell dead from apoplexy. In an instant the tables near him were deserted. There was no one to untie the expiring man's neckerchief. The first thought of every one was how to escape the police, who would have required the daily attendance of all present for an indefinite period, even if they had not imprisoned them, and affected to regard them as the apoplectic gentleman's assassins. The result of such a system is to degrade men to the level of beasts, and policemen to that of demons. It is difficult to believe that such a state of things can exist in the present day in Russia, or that it can ever have existed anywhere else; but we find instances of it in France (to revert to our parallels) in Montaigne's time; and there can be no doubt that, up to the period of the Revolution, the French police were a terror instead of a protection to the lower orders. "Some peasants," writes Montaigne, "have just come over to warn me, in all haste, that they have found in one of my forests a man covered with a hundred wounds, who called out for water and assistance to get up. But they did not dare go near him, and fled away lest the justice folks should seize them; in which case they would have been treated as it is customary to treat people found near a murdered man, for they had no influence or money to prove their innocence. What



can I say to them? It is certain this office of humanity might have brought trouble on them."

To finish with the Russian police officer, I may say that he is an authorized robber, and that everyone knows it—everyone being aware that he "spends half-a-crown out of sixpence a-day," or, to be nearer the truth, in the ratio of five shillings out of threepence. A friend of mine once saw an *isvostchik* almost in tears because a *kvartalny*, or commissary of the quarter, had caused himself to be driven all over Moscow, and then tendered twopence (it reminds one of the good Samaritan) in payment of the fare: of course the driver had no remedy. But the *kvartalny* does not content himself with cheating poor *isvostchiks*, he usually contrives to keep his own equipage—to say nothing of a couple of clerks to do his work—out of a trifling salary; and he extorts money from every householder, or at all events from every trader, in his district. He will take a present of five or ten roubles because it is his birthday, or because it is your birthday, or because you have a sign over your shop, or because you have a shop without any sign over it.

This corruption of the officials was known long since to be the great malady of Russia—I was about to call it a cancer, but it is spread over the whole body like a leprosy, and, like a leprosy it has been pronounced incurable. Nicholas, with all his energy, could do nothing for this disease, though we must remember



that it was under his reign that its diagnosis was first drawn up by the Doctor in Literature, Nicholas Gogol. Fancy what a task the exhibition of Russian official corruption must have been! Every form of extortion and baseness crammed together within the limits of a five-act comedy! The cleansing of the Augean stables was nothing to it: this was a far dirtier work, for it was the collection of Augean filth into one heap; nor until the advent of the present Emperor was any serious attempt made to open the river of reform upon it.

Of the history of the Russian stage—it dates only from the middle of the last century—I shall speak in another chapter; at present I wish only to call attention to the two most remarkable comedies that Russia has produced; viz. “The General Inspector” (*Revizor*), by Gogol; and “Grief from Wit” (*Gore ot Ouma*), by Griboiedoff. These comedies, though entirely different in conception and execution, have the same groundwork—the vices of the Russian official system; and both are written with a serious definite object, such as can be found in no other dramatic work, except, perhaps, Beaumarchais’ “Marriage of Figaro,” which is, in fact, a pamphlet in the dramatic form. In most countries the press, as an organ of criticism, is in advance of the stage; but in Russia, until the present reign, the stage has been in advance of the press.

*Revizor* is in prose, and essentially dramatic; *Gore*



*ot Ouma* is in verse, and essentially lyrical. The prose writer, pursuing a strictly objective method, shows us his officials stealing, cringing, and tyrannizing, without indulging in one cry of indignation, without introducing one honest character into his piece, to tell the others how contemptible they are. "I have laughed with my bitter laugh," says the inscription on Gogol's tomb in the Daniloffsky cemetery, near Moscow; but after the representation of *Revizor*, the public thought the piece so amusing, that the author felt called upon to explain in a preface, that "behind this laughter there were burning tears." In my edition of the play the only preface is this proverb, which is printed on the title-page: "You must not blame the looking-glass if your face is crooked."

On the other hand, the poet Griboiedoff, though possessing many dramatic qualities, does not treat his subject in a truly dramatic style. His personages do not act, they discuss; and in the one good character, who declaims against all the rest, we see the author himself, as in the base and stupid ones we see the author again, only he is speaking ironically.

The only moral gratification the spectator derives from the representation of *Revizor* is that of seeing a host of greedy, fraudulent officials taken in through their very anxiety to cheat or bribe into collusion a General Inspector, who ultimately turns out to be no General Inspector at all. In *Gore ot Ouma*, of which



the object is to show the crushing effect of the official system upon a free-minded young man, who declines to enter "the service," the hero lashes every vice as he points it out.

But, in *Revizor*, the author does not breathe a syllable against cheating and bribery; he contents himself with showing us how terribly every official cheats, and bribes, and takes bribes. We see the villains at their work, and their work is so nefarious that we feel that, after all, Gogol is right: there is nothing to be said. He has exposed a huge social sore, but he is not a dealer in platitudes, to tell you that he objects to sores. There it is, such as it is, and it is for the state surgeon to cauterize it at any risk, or it will destroy the patient.

The plot of Gogol's piece may be told in a few words. Khlestakoff, a young man in the government service at St. Petersburg, in travelling from the capital to his father's estate, has spent all his money, and, from want of funds, is forced to remain in the distant provincial town in which the scene of the comedy is laid. He is in a miserable inn (of which the interior is represented faithfully enough on the Russian stage); he has no money; and the innkeeper not only refuses to give him credit, but even threatens to complain to the police that he has remained several days at his hostelry without paying a *copeik*. Now it happens that in this little town, where each official has his own particular kind of



knavery, the postmaster reads all the letters, as a matter of course; their contents, in fact, form the staple of his conversation, which, as may be expected, is varied and interesting. He even carries the letters about with him, and says to his friends, "Here is a letter from a young man who gives an account of a magnificent ball; I think his description will please you," and so on. This postmaster has ascertained that a General Inspector from St. Petersburg is about to visit them: that he is the bearer of secret instructions; and that he is travelling *incognito*. The governor of the town has also been warned of the advent of this terrible man, and all the officials of the place meet, in order to devise the best means of throwing dust—if necessary gold dust—in his eyes. "I dreamed of rats last night," says the chief; "I knew something fearful was about to happen."

In the first place, the governor recommends a few precautionary measures; for it is barely possible that the government inspector may not be a bribe-taker, but a strict disciplinarian. "If I were you," he says to the superintendent of the hospital, "I should give my patients clean night-caps. The inspector would, perhaps, not like to see them looking like sweeps, as they generally do. And I should have an inscription over each bed—in Latin, or any other language—saying when the patient fell ill, or something of that kind. And I would have fewer patients in the hospital,



or it will be imagined that they are not treated properly."

"As for the treatment," replies the superintendent, "I have arranged all that with the doctor. The simpler the treatment the better. If a man dies, he dies; if he gets well, he gets well. We imitate nature. Besides, how can the doctor speak to the patients about their illnesses when he does not understand a word of Russian?"

Here the German doctor utters an unintelligible sound.

"And you," continues the governor, addressing the judge, "would it not be a good idea to get your court put in order? You keep poultry in your rooms. The rearing of poultry is certainly a meritorious occupation; but—I don't know—I think a law-court, you understand, is not the place. Then in the audience-room there is a hunting-whip on the desk among the papers. I know you are fond of hunting, and you are quite right; but you might as well remove the hunting-whip, and you can put it back on the desk when the inspector has gone. You have other faults, too; of course every one has: Providence has so ordained it, whatever the Voltairians may say—but really you receive too many presents of hounds!"

"Hounds!" replies the judge. "Now, really, what are a few dogs? If a man accepts a fur cloak, worth five hundred roubles, or a cashmere shawl for his wife, it is a different thing!"



“Is it?” rejoins the governor, angrily. “Well! shall I tell you why you accept presents of dogs? It’s because you don’t believe in God. Whatever I may be, I have a religion; but you—when you talk about the formation of the world, you make my hair stand on end.”

The local college is about as well attended to as the hospital and the law-court; the roads are out of order; the streets are not paved; the shopkeepers have been, for years past, forced to make unheard-of presents to the governor on his name’s-day—he contrives to have two name-days every year; and recently a soldier’s wife, who, as a free woman, is not liable to summary corporal punishment, has been flogged. The officials are trembling, quarrelling, and reproaching one another.—“You take so much; I only take so much! *you steal too much for your place* ;” and so on, when suddenly a provincial gossip enters with the information that there is a gentleman at the hotel who pays nobody.

“Then he must be a government officer of high rank,” is the general conviction; and at once a deputation is sent to the inn where Khlestakoff and his servants are staying.

Khlestakoff, hearing the governor of the town announced, concludes that he is about to send him to prison for swindling the hotel-keeper; and here a good scene of equivoque occurs. Khlestakoff begins by



accusing his host. He has given him a bad room, infamous dinners, detestable tea.

The governor is very sorry, and suggests that Khlestakoff shall change his residence.

“ I understand,” says Khlestakoff, indignantly, “ you would have sent me to prison. Do you know who I am, sir ? Do you know that I am a government officer ? ”

“ He is determined to do his duty,” reflects the governor, “ and fears that any neglect on his part will be visited with imprisonment. But how angry he is ! Some one must have told him that I flogged the soldier’s wife, and that I take bribes.” And thereupon he explains that he didn’t flog the soldier’s wife ; and that, as for presents, he has never taken any of much value ; besides which, his salary really doesn’t suffice to pay his expenses.

The astonished Khlestakoff assures the governor that he does not wish to interfere in his private affairs, and that he is only waiting in the town until he receives money from home.

“ How cunning ! ” says the governor to himself ; but he is determined not to be outwitted. “ If you want money,” he observes, “ it is my duty to oblige travellers. Let me lend you two hundred roubles.”

“ Willingly,” replies Khlestakoff.

The governor gives him a roll of notes ; and when the young traveller has consented to pocket them with-



out counting them, exclaims aside: "I have done it beautifully! I see that we shall agree. Instead of two hundred roubles I have given him four!"

Ultimately Khlestakoff goes off to the governor's house, where he is fêted, and not only fêted but bribed by every official in the town. He makes love to the governor's wife, and then proposes to the daughter; upon which the governor himself goes nearly mad, and has visions of becoming a general. Henri Monnier's M. Prudhomme, when he fancies he has been promoted to a seat in the cabinet, and sends his wife out to buy a "*portefeuille de ministre*," is nothing to him.

After all the officials have visited the supposed inspector, the merchants of the town contrive to see him. They bring with them loaves of sugar and bottles of brandy, wherewith to propitiate "his most excellent highness the chief of the finances," as they style him. One sets forth that the governor not only exacts from him clothes for himself and all his family, but that he thinks nothing of taking entire pieces of cloth, of five-and-twenty yards and more, into the bargain. Another complains that, unless he gives various presents to the governor, he is threatened with having a regiment of soldiers billeted upon him. "I cannot beat you," the governor says to him, "because the law does not allow it; but I will pay you out my own way." However, there is nothing pathetic in the grief of these victims of the officials. They have



become utterly degraded through endless persecution, and the example of their superiors; and when they come to complain of the local officials to the official who has arrived from the capital—to the supposed general inspector—they beat their foreheads on the ground and offer him bribes, that he may punish their tormentor.

Then a poor woman comes in, whose husband has been taken for a soldier. “It was against the law,” she says, “for they have no right to take a married man; and, besides, it was the turn of the tailor’s son, but his mother gave some money. Then it was another one’s turn, but his mother took three pieces of cloth to the governor’s wife, so at last they fell upon my unfortunate husband.”

Here Khlestakoff can do nothing. He can accept presents, but he cannot redress injuries. Then other petitioners arrive; and at last the very patients in the hospital have risen from their beds to complain of their ill-treatment and neglect, and actually make their appearance at the wing! But here the scene closes, for the horrible is not admitted even into tragedies—and *Revizor*, it must be remembered, is a comedy.

Khlestakoff has left the town, after promising to return in a few days, the director of the post-office comes in with a letter, which, according to custom, he has opened. It is an epistle from Khlestakoff himself to a friend in St. Petersburg; and the postmaster is natu-



rally anxious to see what the Inspector-General says of himself and his friends. They all assemble, as in the first act, and the letter is produced.

"How could he dare to open the letter of such an important personage!" say the other officials admiringly.

"Personage? He is no personage at all," replies the postmaster; "the deuce knows what he is!"

Here the governor becomes indignant. "Do you know that he is my future son-in-law?" he exclaims; "and that I am going to be a general? and that I will send you to Siberia if you speak in that manner?"

"Siberia is a long way off," returns the postmaster calmly. "Read for yourself."

The next scene, imitated in form from the "Misanthrope," is admirably comic. The letter contains an insulting phrase for every one. The governor, finding that he is exposed, is skipping a sentence, upon which the postmaster takes the letter from him and reads. The postmaster hesitates when he sees that he also is condemned. But the letter is taken from him by the superintendent of the hospital, who stops, however, when *his* name is mentioned; and so on through the entire assembly.

"To think that *I* should have been taken in!" exclaims the governor with charming *naïveté*. "I, who have been thirty years in the service, and have had to deal with the cunningest scoundrels in the world!



Why, I have done three intendants in my time—yes, three intendants; and to do an intendant is something!”

Then the question arises, “Who first said that this swindler was a General Inspector?” “It was you.” “No; it was Bobtchinski.” “No; it was Dobtchinski.” And an unfortunate man named Dobtchinski is being blamed for the whole disaster, when suddenly a courier appears, and announces the arrival of the real inspector, who wishes to see the officials forthwith. The effect of this message may be imagined, and the curtain falls upon the general consternation.

Does it not appear strange that such a comedy should be licensed by the censor? To those who think that the Russian Government looks with favour upon vice and corruption, it must appear strange indeed; but it is a fact that dramatic writers have as much liberty in Russia as in any country in Europe, and that all the great satirists the country has produced have been countenanced and encouraged by the State.

Let us now turn to Griboiedoff's *Gore ot Ouma*, of which an English translation, by Mr. Nicholas Bernardaki, has been published.

*Gore ot Ouma*, being interpreted, means “Grief from Wit”—not, exclusively, the wit which shines in epigrams, but “wit” as the word was understood in the eighteenth century; and the play, while exhibiting an animated satirical picture of Moscow fashionable life



in 1823, points out the fate which inevitably awaits a man of honesty and perception who is surrounded by a society of rogues and fools. Tchatski, the hero, is a misanthrope, but, at the same time, an ardent, enthusiastic young man, who, perhaps, under more favourable circumstances, would not have been a misanthrope at all; though it may be suspected that, as Sophia, the heroine of the piece, observes, "he is happiest where men are most ridiculous." He has very little in common with Molière's "Misanthrope," who, compared with Griboiedoff's hero, is a model of patience. Alceste moralizes, and delivers lengthened disquisitions, while Tchatski is a bitter satirist, and declaims the most elaborate tirades. They, however, resemble one another in this point, that each of them tires his mistress—in the case of the Frenchman, by continual sermonizing; in that of the Russian, by unceasing raillery. There is one very fine idea in the Russian comedy. The intellectual, warm-hearted Tchatski is at length declared to be mad by the company of dolts and knaves against whose vices and meannesses he has in vain directed his satire—just as the patients of a lunatic asylum might resolve unanimously that their visiting physician was insane.

The plot of *Gore of Ouma* is very simple. Tchatski, returning from his travels, finds, after three years' absence from Moscow, that Sophia, whose affection he had once enjoyed, no longer cares for him. The



high-minded but unpleasantly satirical young traveller, who has too much independence to enter the government service, where cringing and flattery alone can procure him advancement, is supplanted by a model functionary named Moltchaline, who is silent before his superiors, lest by too much talking he may utter some unbecoming remarks; who fawns systematically upon those above him, and makes love to the daughter of the chief of his department, merely as a matter of business. "My father, on his death-bed," says the cold-blooded secretary, "counselled me to ingratiate myself with all I came in contact with—with the owner of the house where I lodged, with my superiors in the service, with the servant who brushed my clothes, with the porter who opened the door, and with the very dog of the porter, that it might not snarl at my heels." Sophia really loves Moltchaline, while Moltchaline loves Lisa the *soubrette* of the piece; "and I," says Lisa, "fear love as I do the devil; yet how could any one help loving Petroushka the butler?"

Famoussoff, Sophia's father, is a servile functionary of high rank, who, in his best moments, utters commonplaces of a somewhat florid description; while the homely stupidities pronounced by his friend Skalo-zoub, a military pedant, are principally remarkable for their *naïveté*. The play belongs to satire rather than to comedy. There is a great deal that is terrible,



but not much that is laughable, in Griboiedoff's picture of Moscow society thirty-five years since. As a specimen of the two styles combined, I may give the following speech by Famoussoff, the *laudator temporis acti*, availing myself of M. Bernardaki's prose translation. After upbraiding Tchatski for not entering the government service, the old functionary continues thus:—

“ You young fellows are all proud alike ; but you ought to ask how your fathers acted. It would be much better to learn from those who are older than yourselves—from me, for example, or my late uncle, Maxim Petrovitch. His meals were served not only on silver but on gold plate, with a hundred servants in waiting. He was covered with decorations, and always drove a carriage-and-four. He passed his whole life at court—and such a court ! How different from the present one ! It was the court of the Empress Catherine. At that time all the courtiers weighed at least forty poods. Even if you bowed to the earth they never honoured you with a recognition. . . . As for my uncle, he had a serious aspect and a haughty bearing ; but in the presence of his superiors he could bend his body into a circle. Once, at a great ball at the palace, he slipped and fell so effectually as nearly to break his neck. The old man groaned deeply, and was honoured with an imperial smile. The Empress deigned to laugh—what do you think he did ? He rose, shook himself,



made an effort to bow, and fell again—but this time intentionally. The laughter was continued! A third time he performed the same feat. What is your opinion of that? We considered it ingenious, for by those falls he rose. . . . On account of exploits of this kind, who was always invited to the imperial card-tables, and favoured with the most gracious words? Maxim Petrovitch! Who was always treated with the greatest respect? Maxim Petrovitch! I am not joking. Who used to scatter titles and pensions? Maxim Petrovitch! Yes! and who among you young fellows could have held a candle to him?

“*Tchatski*. You speak the truth. . . . That was, indeed, a century of fear and servility. All was done under the mask of zeal for the sovereign. (I make no allusion to your uncle; we will leave his ashes to repose in peace.) However, now we find few amateurs ready to break their necks for the amusement of the public; and although there are always men prone to baseness, yet in our days the fear of ridicule deters them, and takes the place of honest shame. That is why advancement is so slow in the service.

“*Famoussoff*. Good Lord! He is a Carbonaro!”

Such satire, which in the original is given in ringing verse, would be tolerated in no other country in Europe except England. Certainly no one who ever witnessed the performance of Beaumarchais' masterpiece at the Théâtre Français under the Empire, and



who remembers how Figaro's celebrated soliloquy was mutilated, can suppose that such scenes or such speeches would have been permitted on the stage in France.

Here is another significant extract from an admirable scene in the third act:—

“*Skalozoub*. Shall I tell you a piece of good news? There is a general rumour that in all lyceums, schools, and gymnasiums, nothing save military exercises will be taught, and that books will be reserved for great occasions.

“*Famoussoff*. No, Sergei Sergeitch! If you mean to reach the evil at its root, we must throw all the books into the fire.

“*Ska*. Not at all! There are different kinds of books; but if I were appointed censor, I should certainly be inexorable with regard to fables. I should dread them as the evil one. They are full of jests about lions and eagles. Say what you will, though animals, still they are potentates.”

The original has it, “Though animals, they are still *Tzars*”; and it is a fact, that in Kriloff's fables nearly every abuse in Russia is attacked in some shape or other.

After making use of M. Bernardaki's translation, it may appear ungracious to find fault with it; but there is no concealing the fact that it needs correcting, and it is sufficiently good to be worth the trouble. It



certainly conveys an idea of the substance of the original, though the style all but perishes in the double translation from Russian into English, and from verse into prose. As a general rule, M. Bernardaki endeavours to render his author literally ; but in the low-comic portions of the piece, he appears to aim at Anglicising the dialogue, after the manner of our “adapters” from the French ; thus Lisa declares that she is “in a nice mess,” and Tchatski is said to be “as mad as a March hare.”

Independently of its other qualities, *Gore ot Ouma* possesses great merit in a theatrical or spectacular point of view. There is a scene in the last act, where the company at a ball cross the stage in groups as their carriages are announced, which is full of animation, and which is always highly successful in representation. “In general,” says a Russian critic, “we think very little about enlivening the action, and of impressions from the stage, forgetting that it is not for nothing that a drama is called a spectacle, and that it has to be shown to the audience. Hence many of our comedies are kinds of ‘dialogues of the dead.’ You have not the real world of living beings before you, but shadows with neither face nor body.”

The end of the second act is also very novel and effective. Tchatski is declaiming one of his long tirades against the imitation of foreign manners. His audience disappear one by one, until, after an unusually violent outburst, he suddenly turns round and finds



himself without a listener. The men and women he would reform are seen waltzing in the background, and the curtain falls.

It must be added that these scenes, like most of the characters, are quite episodical. "They can be taken out, changed, or added to," says the Russian critic from whom I have already quoted, "and you will not detect a gap or an addition." In this respect the piece resembles the comedies of Von Vesin; and it has been remarked that, in the hero himself, there is a likeness to Von Vesin's Staradom. Tchatski is, in fact, one of the variations of a type that is constantly reappearing in Russian literature—the independent man struggling against a network of officialism that envelopes him. Among the purely episodical scenes alluded to, it may be mentioned that there are several in which the imitation of the French is ridiculed, and one which contains an amusing account of a midnight club, established for the discussion of English poetry and English politics.

The dialogue is full of epigrams, written in metre of the most varied description. In fact, there are as many different forms of verse in *Gore ot Ouma* as there are airs in an opera. Two of the numerous amusing conceits are easily turned into English rhyme. Famossoff, hearing that Sophia sits up all night reading French novels, exclaims :—

"Thanks to French books, her eyes she seldom closes,  
While I o'er Russian ones have frequent dozes."



Lisa, speaking of an old maid who had been driven to despair by the departure of a young Frenchman, remarks :—

“When the young Frenchman went away,  
In vain her grief she strove to hide ;  
In three short days her hair turned gray,  
—She’d quite forgot to have it dyed.”

As the lives of Russian literary men have, for the most part, been made known to us by authors who have had special reasons for detesting the Russian Government, some account of the career of an eminent poet like Griboiedoff would have been very acceptable coming from the pen of an impartial writer like M. Bernardaki. Mr. Herzen, in his work *Du Développement des Idées Révolutionnaires en Russie*, after stating that in Russia “a dark and terrible fate is reserved for any one who dares to raise his head above the level traced by the imperial sceptre,” proceeds to give a list of authors whom “an inexorable fatality has thrust into the tomb.” In company with Poushkin and Lermontoff (who fell in duels of their own seeking), with Veneveintoff, “killed by society,” Koltzoff, “killed by his family,” Belinski, “killed by hunger and misery,” and Ryleieff, “hung by Nicholas,”\* we find

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\* Victor Hugo and Lamartine fought duels, and might have been shot ; so might Byron and Moore, and nearly all the writers of the last generation. Armand Carrel *was* killed in a duel. Gilbert and Hippolyte Moreau died of hunger. Gérard de Nerval, in the



Griboiedoff, "assassinated at Teheran." The reader naturally imagines that the assassination of Griboiedoff was somehow or other connected with his intellectual superiority; and the reader is right. Griboiedoff, the brilliant poet and satirist, having already served with distinction in Persia, under Paskievitch, was appointed minister plenipotentiary to the court of Teheran, where he was killed during an insurrection; so that it may be asserted, without positively transgressing the bounds of truth, that Griboiedoff would probably not have been murdered unless he had written the best comedy in the Russian language.

Poushkin has left an account of his meeting with the remains of his brother poet, as they were being conveyed through Armenia to the capital of Georgia:—

"Two oxen yoked to an *araba*," says the author of *Oneygin*, "ascended the steep road; several Georgians were accompanying it. 'Where do you come from?' I asked them. 'From Teheran.' 'What are you conveying?' 'Griboiedoff.' It was the corpse of the murdered Griboiedoff which they were taking to Tiflis. I never thought to have met our Griboiedoff thus. I had parted from him the year before in St.

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deepest poverty, hanged himself. Gros, the painter, cut his throat. So did Léopold Robert. So did our Haydon. Such instances (which might easily be multiplied) prove nothing against the government of a country. As for Ryleieff, he was hanged, not as a poet, but as a conspirator and a shedder of blood.



Petersburg, when he was about to set off for Persia. He was melancholy, and troubled with a strange presentiment. I endeavoured to tranquillize him, but he said to me, '*Vous ne connaissez pas ces gens-là : vous verrez qu'il faudra jouer des couteaux.*' He thought the cause of the bloodshed would be the death of the Shah, and the breaking out of a civil war among his seventy sons ; but the aged Shah is still living, and the prophetic words of Griboiedoff have nevertheless been fulfilled. He perished beneath the Persian daggers, the victim of ignorance and perfidy ; and his mutilated corpse, after having been for three days the plaything of the mob, could only be recognised by one of the hands, which bore the mark of a pistol-shot. I made the acquaintance of Griboiedoff in 1817. His melancholy disposition, his keen wit, his good heart, his very weaknesses and vices—the inevitable attendants of our poor human nature—everything about him was singularly fascinating. Born with ambition equal to his genius, he was for a long time entangled in the meshes of petty wants. His abilities as a statesman were never brought into play ; his poetic talent was not recognized : even his cool, dazzling bravery, remained for some time under suspicion. Some of his friends knew his worth, though they saw the smile of distrust—that silly, intolerable smile which is assumed by mediocrity when the name of a very remarkable man happens to be mentioned. People believe only in



fame, and do not understand that among them there may be some Napoleon who has not even the command of a light-infantry company, or a second Descartes, who has not yet published a line in the 'Moscow Telegraph.' . . . Perhaps our respect for fame has its origin in self-love, as we assist with our own voices in creating it. . . . The life of Griboiedoff was sometimes over-clouded—the result of his fiery passions and of imperious circumstances. But he felt the necessity of making up accounts with his youth once and for ever. He suddenly changed his mode of life, bade farewell to St. Petersburg, and with it to his holiday existence, and went off to Georgia, where he remained eight years in great retirement and incessant study."

It was during his residence in Georgia that Griboiedoff gained that knowledge of the Oriental languages which afterwards distinguished him. There, too, he wrote his *Gore ot Ouma*—at Tiflis, in 1822. It was produced about a year afterwards, and the author at once took his rank among the first poets of Russia. After the great success of his comedy, Griboiedoff appears to have remained some time in Moscow and St. Petersburg, contributing to various periodicals, and among others to Ryleieff's "Polar Star." It was in the "Polar Star" that the author of *Gore ot Ouma* first published his translation of Göthe's "Prologue to Faust." Shortly before the insurrection of 1825 (after which Ryleieff, who was one of the five leaders, was



executed) Griboiedoff visited Georgia for the second time, and soon after his arrival in Tiflis married the sister of Prince Chavchavadzey—the Georgian nobleman whose family was carried off a few years since by Shamil's mountaineers, and detained for nearly eight months in the Caucasian chief's seraglio.\* After conducting the negotiations with the Persians at the close of the war of 1827, Griboiedoff was chosen by Paskievitch to present the treaty of peace to the Emperor, on which occasion he received four thousand pieces of gold, the Order of St. Anne, and the rank of councillor of state—corresponding to that of colonel in the army. Exactly one year had elapsed since Griboiedoff's presentation of the treaty to the Emperor, when the news was received at St. Petersburg of his assassination at Teheran. He perished in the thirty-fifth year of his age, leaving behind him, together with several dramatic productions that are now nearly forgotten, one masterpiece, which still fills the Moscow and St. Petersburg theatres whenever it is performed, though the state of society which it depicts has, happily, in a great measure passed away.

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\* See "Captivity of Two Russian Princesses in the Caucasus," translated from the Russian by H. Sutherland Edwards. Smith and Elder.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## SOCIETY AND THE STAGE.

PEOPLE amuse themselves in St. Petersburg and Moscow very much as they do in other European capitals. The upper classes are fond of the opera and of balls. The lower classes are fond of drinking. The middle classes unite in a moderate way the tastes of the other two. Then there is a literary and artistic class, of which the most distinguished members belong also, either naturally or by adoption, to the highest, but which may at the same time be looked upon as forming a class apart. It is a fact that even the "Bohemian" exists in Russia, though he has not yet found a Henry Murger to describe him. Certainly Paneeff, in his "Experiments with Russian Snobs," introduces a family of artists, in whom some decided traits of Bohemianism are distinguishable; but it is a known characteristic of the true Bohemian to despise family life. However, I knew a couple of Bohemians living in Moscow whom



Schaunart himself would not have disavowed. They even possessed that quality which can alone entitle the Bohemian to the slightest consideration—namely, great talent. I saw a “Moonlight View of the Kremlin from the Banks of the Moskva,” by one of them, and a representation of the “Emperor’s Banquet to the People,” together with some very humorous caricatures, by the other, which told plainly that they would in due time desert their camp; and, in fact, the former is now painting for the court, while the latter is married, industrious, and successful. I attach some importance to the fact that Bohemians are to be found in Russia, because it seems to denote the existence of a larger artistic body than the country is generally supposed to possess. It must, at the same time, be remembered that the artists of Russia in general belong to a lower class of society than the authors. A painter like Verestchagin occupies the same position as a poet like Poushkin; but Russia has produced very few distinguished artists, whereas she has produced a great many justly distinguished poets and prose writers; and thus, perhaps, it has come to pass that, except by a small circle in the capitals, it is considered undignified for a member of a good family to occupy himself with art, except purely as a relaxation. It should not be inferred from this that artists are not honoured, and that art is not encouraged in Russia, but merely that the profession of painter is one that is not adopted by



members of the upper classes. A great many noble-men publish books, but very few exhibit pictures.

As very few gentlemen, then, become artists, there are a good many artists who find it difficult to become gentlemen, in the conventional sense of the term; and who, possessing no education but the special one which enables them to pursue their profession, are quite unfitted for a society in which, in spite of the national movement now taking place, it is still held that ignorance of the French language implies ignorance of the ordinary courtesies of life. Thus they are driven to associate exclusively with one another. If their position or want of acquirements prevents them mixing with the nobility, they cannot, and will not, have anything to do with the merchants, who are to them what the *bourgeois* is to the French *rapin*, or the *Philister* to the German student. As Gogol and Griboiedoff make war upon the abuses of the official system, and the imitation of foreign manners, so Ostrofski devotes himself to the comic representation of the merchant, with his avarice, his ostentation, and his vulgarity.

M. Jourdain and George Dandin have long been impossible characters in England and France; or, if they exist, they are no longer considered ridiculous. George Dandin, in England, would marry an earl's daughter, and the countess would be very civil to him, and ask him for allotments of shares; while M. Jourdain would explain to his child's suitor that it was absolutely



necessary he should be a nobleman to aspire to her hand ; and no one would see anything laughable in the assertion, if the father of the young lady were really as rich as Molière's hero is supposed to be. But in Russia there is a very broad distinction between the gentleman and the trader, which extends even to costume. Thirty years ago the richest merchants in St. Petersburg wore beards, and caftans, and shoes made of bark. That is not the case now ; and I myself dined in Moscow with a merchant of the first guild, whose clothes might have been made by the best tailor in London or Paris ; who had three or four kinds of French wine at table ; whose daughters played airs from *Ernani* and *Rigoletto*, and spoke French nearly as well as their French governess ; who had a *suite* of five spacious and admirably-furnished reception-rooms on the ground-floor of his house, which was quite apart from his place of business ; and who, I am sure, had only allowed a few national dishes to form part of the elegant repast that was served to us out of consideration to my natural curiosity as a foreigner on the subject of Russian cookery. There was nothing that was ridiculous, and a great deal that was becoming, in the appearance and manners of this merchant ; and the only sign I could discover of the bad taste said to be so characteristic of his class in Russia, was in the common-place engravings with which his walls were hung. These productions were inferior in execution to the worst woodcuts that ever



appeared in a cheap illustrated paper, and represented such scenes as the passage of a river in the Caucasus ; or the vengeance of a party of Russian soldiers on some Turks who had just assassinated a Greek priest ; or the heroic efforts of some Russian sailors to save some other Turks from a sinking boat while the Turkish batteries on the shore did not cease for a moment to fire upon them. They belonged to that class of pictures which are usually offered for sale in the streets and under gateways, and which find most of their purchasers among soldiers and servant-maids. Probably the merchant had spent some two or three thousand pounds on the furniture of the *suite* of rooms in which he received his friends (his piano alone must have cost upwards of two hundred), while the whole sum he had expended on pictures could scarcely have amounted to half a sovereign ; and what a half-sovereign's worth he had selected ! Doubtless the subjects of the engravings interested him ; but it never seemed to have occurred to him that the execution was a matter of any importance whatever. However, this merchant, with his shaven chin, and in his suit of black cloth, was far from being a type of his class. He was a polite, intelligent man, well informed on all points connected with the commerce of Russia, and an ardent supporter of the reforms at that time known to be contemplated by Alexander II. ; and, like every Russian I ever met, a great talker of politics, domestic and foreign. Doubt-



less many of the next generation of merchants will resemble the one whose acquaintance I made; for though the present race have for the most part received very little instruction themselves, they now send their sons to the government gymnasiums, where, for a small annual payment, a very good education is obtained. In the meanwhile the Russian merchant, as he exists, is a fine subject for comedy.

Nearly all those who do not wear the caftan, which many still retain, have adopted a sort of compromise between it and the frock-coat. Very few have even abandoned their beards,—in fact, none but some rich members of the first guild, who are already half ashamed of being merchants, and who may be expected to send their sons into either the military or the civil service. It is this weakness and vanity of the merchants (as Prince Dolgorouki has well pointed out in his “Hand-book to some of the principal Russian Families”) that causes their order to be viewed with so much contempt. And so notorious is this ambition of the Russian merchant to rise to a sphere for which he is quite unfitted, that it is constantly made the subject of ridicule on the Russian stage. Indeed, for several years past, scarcely a comedy has been played in Moscow or St. Petersburg in which the weakness in question is not incidentally introduced, even if it does not, as is frequently the case, form the main subject of the piece.



The merchants are not only less civilized, in the ordinary sense of the term—that is to say, less educated and less accomplished—than the nobles, which is what one expects to find in all countries, but they are also less natural. We know that numbers of the middle classes in England are afflicted with a rage for imitating those above them; that they pay visits at what was their fathers' tea-time, and dine at their fathers' supper-time; frequent the Opera under pretence of liking Donizetti and Verdi; and make autumnal tours through countries of which the language is a mystery to them. But, for all that, our middle classes, as a mass, have English habits; and their lives are more natural than those of their social superiors. They have fewer and less unhealthy amusements; they rise and go to bed earlier; their marriages are for the most part marriages of inclination, not to say love. It is not for *their* wives and daughters that the Rachels of the period go forth every evening in the season with a little box of precious dyes and rare dentifrices and lip-salves that are warranted not to wash off; nor that Bond Street perfumers announce their “blooms” and their “*blancs de perle*.” Now, in Russia, whatever virtues the middle classes may boast of, it is quite certain they do not possess that of simplicity. The women of the upper classes (except in rare instances, as in other countries), do not paint; the merchants' wives, however, as a general rule, do; and it is easy



to see that their complexions are false, if only by the discoloration of their teeth, which, owing to the effect of certain metallic pigments, are often very nearly black. This barbarous system of face-painting appears to be a relic of the supremacy of the Tartars, about which so little is known, but which must have had more effect than the Russians willingly admit; though, at the same time, infinitely less than is supposed by the Western nations.

Miçkiewicz, half unwilling, perhaps, to admit that one branch of the great Slavonian family could cordially detest another, used to taunt the Russians with being Mongols; while the Oriental caftan and shaven head of the Polish nobles (long after the Western costume had been forced by Peter upon the noblemen of Russia) made Archdeacon Coxe, and other travellers of the last century, assign to them a Tartar origin. Miçkiewicz's sneer was intended specially for the upper classes of Russia; and he firmly maintained that all the virtue of the country was to be found among the more or less Slavonian peasantry. However that may be, it is certain that there is scarcely an illustrious name in Russia which can be traced to the Tartars. Almost the only one is that of Rostopchin, which in Russia has been rendered almost as celebrated by the poetic genius of the present countess as by the patriotic incendiarism of her father-in-law, who was governor of Moscow in 1812. The best families in Russia are of



Lithuanian, or, above all, Norman origin ; and a large number of the men who have most distinguished themselves in Russian history are the lineal descendants of Ruric or his companions. Most of them have been men of action, but the poet Poushkin is also reckoned among them.

But to return to the merchants. Another vestige of the Tartar domination in Russia, then, is found in the unwillingness of some of the merchants' wives to dance, or to appear at public assemblies, or to allow any one to see their hair, which they carefully envelope in handkerchiefs. Moreover, it is impossible to enter a large *traktir*, or restaurant frequented by merchants (I mean in Moscow, not in St. Petersburg) without being struck by the various Oriental and Mongol characteristics of the place ; such for instance, as the use of the *chibouk*, which is taken ready lighted from the hands of the waiter ; the employment of an enormous number of servants ; the drinking of a glass of spirits before dinner, but not after it ; and the immoderate consumption of tea, of which the Russian merchant—especially if he is making a bargain—will take as many as fifteen or sixteen cups ; remaining, in fact, with his tea-pot and his urn before him (the real Chinese urn, by the bye) through an entire afternoon. Whether or not all classes of the community felt the influence of the Mongols equally, may be doubted. The merchants may have adopted their peculiar customs either during the



subjection of Russia to the Golden Horde, or as a result of their frequent journeyings to Mongolia and the frontiers of China. However that may be, the upper classes, since Peter's time, have gradually been adopting the civilization first of Germany, then of France, and latterly of England; whereas the merchants, as a body, appear to have remained stationary.

Those customs of the merchants that I have already mentioned are, however, as nothing compared with the prejudices which exist among them on the subject of marriage. Among the highest classes there may be state or family reasons which excuse, if they do not justify, the *mariage d'intérêt*; and yet, in Russia, it is only among these that a marriage of inclination ever takes place. "Many of our countrymen," says one of the young countesses in *Gore ot Ouma*, "without thinking any previous warning necessary, improvise relations for us in the shops of our *marchandes de mode*." "Poor fellows!" replies the hero of the piece, "they must bear the reproaches of those who imitate milliners, for having preferred the originals to the copies!" Now, without accepting either of these sarcasms as expressing the literal truth, it may be said that there is a substratum of fact beneath each; and, on the whole, it is creditable to Russia that an independent man like Tchatski—a true, though perhaps a rare type—should now and then exist, to be even suspected of the eccentricity sneeringly attributed to him by the woman of



fashion. Certainly the merchants are never accused of any such forgetfulness of matrimonial etiquette, for they sell their daughters and buy their sons-in-law, as if they were so much merchandise. I do not say that marriages of love are by any means frequent among the nobles; but among the merchants they never take place at all.

Ordinarily matrimonial unions in the middle classes are arranged by an intermediary, called a *svakha*, who will find a bride or bridegroom, as may be required; and it is not considered at all necessary or desirable that the young people should be acquainted with one another before their marriage. In a play represented at the Little Theatre in Moscow, under the title of "A Russian Wedding of the Olden Time," chiefly remarkable for the richness and variety of the costumes, the bride's face is concealed from the bridegroom until the performance of the marriage ceremony. This is, indeed, the foundation of the whole piece, which turns upon the despair of a young man already in love at being forced by his parents to marry a girl he has never seen, and his joy on discovering, at the last moment, that his betrothed and his beloved are one and the same person.

It would not interest the reader if I were to give the plots of some of the merchant-comedies that I have seen, as their great merit consists in the humour with which the manners and peculiar verbal expression of the class are reproduced. One of the best of the kind



is M. Ostroffski's *Svoi Ludi*, &c. In this piece there is a merchant's daughter, who, wishing to get married, of course desires to unite herself to what, in England, we should familiarly call "a swell." When a young merchant appears, and asks for her hand, she views him with silent contempt, until, at last, he makes a passionate appeal, and, as an extreme proof of his devotion, exclaims, "I will do anything for you! Tell me to go to a German tailor's and get a fashionable coat" (he wears a caftan), "tell me even to shave off my beard, and I will do it!" "I only ask for one proof of affection," says the young lady. "What is it?" demands the swain. "Learn to speak French!"

Besides the comedies which exhibit the vices of officialism and the effect of the official system on the independent man, and those which deal with the absurdities of the merchants, there are some others of larger scope, among which the most remarkable, perhaps, is Gogol's "Marriage." In this comedy we have a fine study of the bachelor as a character. A single man of confirmed bachelor habits wishes to take a wife. He does not understand the French language himself, but, of course, insists on marrying a young lady who speaks French. This, however, is merely a detail. The main idea of the piece, and a highly philosophical one it is, is this,—that a bachelor of a certain age must necessarily dread to alter his mode of life to suit that of another person. The chief character



of the comedy, who is considered "a good match," after considering the qualifications of a number of marriageable young ladies, who are all anxious to secure him, selects one; but no sooner has he given his word than he repents. He is afraid of the total change that must take place in his habits after he is married. It is not a love-match, for he is a middle-aged man and something more. He reflects, but the bride is coming down stairs in her wedding costume, and there is no time for consideration. The handle of the door moves, and it appears impossible to escape; but the window is open. He leaps into the street, and is saved. You hear him call out to a droshky-driver, "*Isvostchik! isvostchik!*" He has disappeared for ever, and the curtain falls.

Native comedies are not played at the large theatres in Russia, any more than in other European countries, where the opera has half extinguished the drama. In Moscow they are represented at what is called the Little Theatre; in St. Petersburg at the Tsirk, or the Alexander Theatre.

Of course, in Russia, where everything is translated, they translate comedies and vaudevilles from the French. One night, as I was going into the Little Theatre in Moscow, I found that Molière's "MICAHTPOH" was to be played. Another time it was the well-known vaudeville, "A. Φ."—the French A. F. These Russian characters, which are for the most part Greek, have, to



a stranger, quite a burlesque effect, when for the first time he sees them on a play-bill. "Sheridan," for instance, with a rho for an *r*, and a delta for a *d*, looks exceedingly strange. "The School for Scandal," I must add, is one of the stock pieces of the Russian stage.

Perhaps Russia will some day be celebrated for comedies; but I fancy that, in its leap from semi-barbarism to civilization, it is skipping tragedy altogether, which, as a general rule, appears to be an anterior product. Soumorokoff may have had great poetic genius, but he was an imitator, and in the present day he is not acted.

Before dismissing the subject of the Russian stage, I must mention that many of the rich Russian proprietors used, in the days before the emancipation, to have theatres on their estates, a few of which were well appointed in all respects. As the manager was proprietor not only of the theatre, but also of the actors and actresses, he was never troubled with refusals to appear in such and such a part or with such and such a performer; his tenors had no suspicious sore throats, and his dancers enjoyed wonderful health. Good chorus and ballet-masters were engaged at these private theatres, and occasionally an accomplished artist was produced. This system of private theatres on private estates had, of course, its dark, its terrible side. "Think of the hoary dotard," says the hero of Griboiedoff's comedy, "who, for the sake of a ballet of



his own invention, tore all the children on his estate from the arms of their despairing fathers and mothers. His loves and zephyrs had made him indifferent to the rest of the world. It is true all Moscow flocked to admire his ballet, but that did not procure from his creditors a longer delay, and his loves and zephyrs were brought to the hammer. Such are the men whose grey hair we are called upon to reverence."

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## CHAPTER V.

## MOSCOW "THE HOLY."

"How beautiful, how magnificent," says Sagoskin, "is our Kremlin on a calm summer's night, when the redness of evening is dying away in the west, and the night-beauty, the full moon, floats out from beneath the clouds, and spreads her mild light over the sky and the whole world! If you wish to spend a few really happy moments, if you wish to feel that inexpressible tranquillity of the soul which is higher than all earthly delights, go on a moonlight summer's night to admire our Kremlin. Take your seat on one of the benches of the terrace, on the path which extends along the very edge of the slope; forget for a time the noisy world and all its follies, all your earthly cares and occupations, and give, if only for once, permission to your harassed and weary soul to breathe freely. Late



in the evening you will not meet any one in the Kremlin ; at eleven o'clock at night you will hear only the rare calls and the measured steps of the watchmen. Beneath your feet there will be a rumbling of equipages, varied by the shouts of the *isvoschiks* and the conversation of the promenaders on the banks of the Moskva. From the other side of the river come the merry songs of the workmen, and the dull confused talk of the Transmoskovians, whispering to you as it were of the pleasures and occupations of this earthly life. But all this is far from you ; you are above it all. A few clouds have covered the bright moon, and the other side of the river is under a deep shade ; the bright waves of the Moskva are dimmed, and the houses are shrouded in gloom. But here, on the heights of the Kremlin, all is light, and the summits of the churches glitter as before, and the gilt cross of Ivan Veliki burns like a star in the heavens. Look around ; see in what harmony and magnificence rise before you all those ancient cathedrals, in which sleep the imperishable bodies of the saints of Moscow. Oh, how solemn is the silence, how sacred the feeling inspired by the scene ! Here the gorgeous palaces of the Russian Tzars, and there, at two steps from them, their simple burial-place ! How all this carries you away from the world, extinguishes your passions, and humbles your heart, filling it with a feeling of inexpressible tranquillity and peace ! Below, all is movement and anxiety ; people are busy about their



affairs, or helping one another to kill time : but here all is quiet, all is tranquil, and yet all is life—but it is life of another kind. Those high walls, those ancient towers and imperial palaces, are not without speech : they speak to you of the past ; in the soul of your memory rise thoughts of ages long since gone. Here everything appeals to your recollection, reminding you of both the misfortunes and the glories of your forefathers, their sufferings, their perturbations, and their firm belief in Providence, which so quickly and so wonderfully caused the greatness of Russia, and which guards her as the chosen instrument for carrying out its inscrutable designs. Here you are surrounded by the holiness of Russia, and commune with it as you think of your heavenly home. Your soul throws off its clay and its thoughts of earth ; thoughts of the eternal give it wings, and it flies to regions where we shall no longer be divided into generations and nations, where there will be neither ages nor time, weeping nor pain. . . . Go to the Kremlin rather late in the evening, and if you are not altogether unaccustomed to hold communion with yourself, if you can live for a few moments without others, then you will certainly thank me for my advice. At least you will not be sorry if you attend to me and remain a little while in the Kremlin ; for by moonlight it is so magnificent that you ought absolutely to do so, if only for the love of the beautiful.”

“It is delightful,” says Mouravieff, the Eastern



traveller, and author of the "History of the Russian Church," "to stand on the heights of the Kremlin during the hour of vespers, when to the call of the golden-headed giant (Ivan Veliki) suddenly respond from all sides the voices of his numberless children, and the sound reverberates through the startled air—the many silver-voiced sound, formed not out of the tolling alone, but out of thoughts, feelings, and words which fall not to the earth. The language of the heavens is floating through the sky, and encompassing the city with its glorious hymn; it is the holy symbol of the host of angels, the watchmen of our Russian land, ever hovering over our heaven-watched tower to chase away the princes of darkness. In the mean time, under the canopy of a benign sky calmly rests the earth, as if in its mother's lap, and bright is the evening visage of the white-walled Moscow, with her blue waters and green gardens. It is the last hour of expiring day, which seems to part from her with regret, decorating her like a bride with fantastic flowers wherever it can delay one of its tardy rays; now burning like gold over a crowd of cupolas and crosses; now like maidens' blushes on the walls of the churches; now bringing out the white phantoms of the lofty towers from the mass of buildings which surround them. These phantoms, rising as it were from the darkness of past ages, speak of bygone glory; huge records of our empire are those stone columns erected by our forefathers as



memorials of great deeds, so that at the sight of them they might fortify themselves by prayer for new achievements.”

Mouravieff then names the edifices which are particularly remarkable for their religious and patriotic associations. Directly opposite the Kremlin is the church where, for a long time, lay the remains of Prince Michael and the boyar Fedor, who sealed their belief in Christ with their blood in the presence of the savage Batu-Khan. Beyond it are the ancient towers of the Simeonoff Monastery, marking the place where a victory was gained over the Tartars; and the church of St. Sergius, who by his prayers moved the warriors of the Don to overcome Mamai. To the left rises by itself the tall belfry of the “Newly Saved,” and with it the recollection of another decisive triumph over the Mongols, when the last khan was put to flight, and the fall took place of the golden tax,\* which for two centuries had oppressed Russia; coupled with this is the memory of the great Ivan,† who first collected the Russians under one banner, and armed them to throw off the Tartar yoke. A third monastery to the right of the Simeonoff, Donskoi by name, is an echo of the first

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\* The tribute exacted by the Golden Horde.

† Ivan III., first Tzar of Russia, who married Sophia, the niece of Constantine Palæologus, shortly after the fall of Constantinople, and was by her encouraged to rise against the Tartar chiefs.



victory of St. Sergius, the destroyer of Mamai, the Tartar chief, and whose image carried by Demetrius "Donskoi" (of the Don) is said to have saved Russia a second time, when the prince just mentioned defeated Ghirei Sahib of the Crimea, who had been "gloating over Moscow" from the Koolik hills. "At the foot of this picturesque eminence, now shaded by tranquil groves, flows in peace the river Moskva like the Roman Tiber, the witness of innumerable battles, and which has drunk deep of the enemies' blood. But let the redness of the battles be forgotten; the flowing waves have carried all away with them. Now the river gaily waters its green banks, with its gardens and its willow trees, and curls like a dark blue riband among them, until at last it flows through the magnificent city of churches and palaces; then, dashing in a sounding torrent against the arches of the bridges as against the strings of a harpsichord, it murmurs past the grey walls of the Kremlin, which loves to admire itself in the mirror of its surface, with all its cupolas and battlements, rejoicing in its golden-headed glory. It again dashes its waves against the other arches, and still murmuring its peaceful song glides away like a playful child from the glance of its venerable mother, the city, into the free lap of its own groves and meadows, to the flocks which are folded in the green fields of the Simeonoff Monastery." Then the Kremlin goes to sleep with Moscow at its feet; "but around it walks the



moon in the heavens, as if watching over the holy city, together with the sacred eikons illuminated by the lamps at the entrance of every church. How consoling, both for the eye and the heart, is this combination of the earthly and the heavenly light! And yonder, where the broad rays of the moon do not penetrate, impeded by the masses of churches and towers, like a bright star in the darkness burns the golden halo which enshrines the face of the Virgin, smiling benignantlly with her heavenly child upon the passing devotees. All is still, and as if dead—if one can be dead in the Kremlin, where the very corpses sleep in their shrines as if in their nightly beds.\* To the south, the Moscow river is neither heard nor seen; the only sound is when the wind agitates the chains which hang from the crosses that surmount the churches and towers, or when one of the tuneful sisters leads a general chorus, and striking the hours counts the time as a rich man counts his treasure. Or suddenly from Ivan Veliki rises the drawling call of the watchman, which is answered from all the gates, and then again the grey Kremlin is left to its nightly silence, its peaceful rest, in the midst of which, from the abundance of heavenly watching, that of men seems superfluous.”

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\* In the cathedral of the Archangel Michael, the burial-place of the grand princes and tzars, the coffins are exposed in the body of the church.



Karamsin has also written some eloquent pages concerning the Kremlin, regarded, as might be expected, from an historical point of view. From the Kremlin battlements the remains of Demetrius the Impostor were fired off in the direction of Poland, whence the invasion had proceeded. Beneath its walls, in the Red Place, the massacre of the Strelitzes, or musketeers, who rose against Peter the Great, was directed by that monarch in person. There too—more glorious recollection—Prince Pojarski and Minin, the cattle-dealer of Nijni Novgorod, liberated Moscow from the Polish yoke; their statues mark the spot where their last decisive victory was gained, and through the Kremlin's Holy Gate, which faces it, and beneath which no one may pass without uncovering, Pojarski made his triumphant entry after driving out the invaders. In the Kremlin Dmitri Donskoi hoisted his black flag, when he marched against Mamai the Tartar; and here Ivan the Great trod under foot the image of the Khan, to which as Grand Prince of Moscow he was called upon to do obeisance. The spot is shown where Demetrius the Impostor fell, in jumping from one of the windows at the back of the palace. On the threshold of the cathedral of the Assumption the young Tzar Michael, first of the Romanoffs, received the congratulations and protestations of fidelity from the people, by whom he had just been elected.

In fact, the Kremlin is the heart of Moscow, which



is the heart of all Russia. Many writers speak of the Kremlin as if it were a palace or a cathedral, or both, whereas it is a distinct quarter of the city, containing palaces, cathedrals, churches, monasteries, arsenals, the Imperial treasury, the senate, the residence of the commandant, the office of the Holy Synod, the city granary, the ancient college, the private mansions of Prince Troubetzkoi and Count Sheremetieff, &c. Originally all Moscow was in the Kremlin, which is a large irregular polygon, with lofty dentellated walls (formerly surrounded by a moat), having a tower at each angle. The present walls and towers were built by two Italian architects, Marco and Pietro Antonio, during the reign of the Grand Duke Ivan Vassilievitch (afterwards the Tzar Ivan III., surnamed the Great), in place of the original one constructed by Demetrius Donskoi as a rampart against the Tartars. It would be difficult to say to what kind of architecture the battlements, towers, and gates belong; but they are more Gothic than anything else. Every tower and every gate, of which there are five, is of different construction, though presenting general points of resemblance; and in the interior the cathedrals, churches, and public buildings are of all periods and styles, the most prevalent being the old Russian, or Russo-Byzantine, while the most striking incongruity is caused by the Italian architecture of the magnificent palace, erected not many years since by the native artist, Tonn. The Kremlin stands on the



highest of the seven hills (more or less) on which Moscow is built—a peculiarity which has made Madame de Staël call it, very incorrectly, “the Tartar Rome:” since the Kremlin, which, in the first instance, constituted the entire capital, was erected as a protection *against* the Tartars. In the course of time houses were built on all sides of it, except on the banks of the Moskva, at its foot; and as early as the fourteenth century Demetrius Donskoi found it necessary to practise the manœuvre afterwards adopted on a larger scale by Alexander’s generals in 1812, and on a smaller by Prince Gortschakoff at Sebastopol in 1855. Demetrius, attacked by the Lithuanians, set fire to the exterior town, which was entirely consumed, and retired within the Kremlin, or “fortress,” where he defended himself until the approach of winter caused the enemy to retire. Exterior Moscow was rebuilt; but it again fell frequently in part, and sometimes almost entirely, a prey to fire—the result either of accident or of battles against the Tartars, the Lithuanians, or the Poles. At one time the chief market of Moscow was the house-market, where the burnt-out proprietors could obtain any kind of wooden domicile they required at a moment’s notice.

Except perhaps Constantinople, no town in Europe affords such a varied and picturesque view as is obtained in Moscow from the terrace of the Kremlin, or of Moscow from the Sparrow Hills, whence the whole city



is seen in the form of a vast amphitheatre. From these heights the vanguard of Napoleon's army obtained their first glimpse of the Russian national capital, which they had marched a thousand miles in order to destroy. Then, as now, the spectator from the Sparrow Hills found a most magnificent panorama extended at his feet. Moscow, it is true, is at some miles' distance; but the atmosphere of the north is so transparent, and the city is so completely free from smoke,\* that not a line or a tint in its picturesque and richly-coloured architecture is lost. High above the mass of buildings rises the Kremlin—a pyramid of cupolas, either of burning gold or of bright ultramarine, spangled with gilt stars, surrounded by a crowd of other cupolas, with innumerable steeples and belfries in the form of minarets. The grey dentellated walls of the old fortress are relieved by the green slope which leads from the lofty terrace to the banks of the river, and these banks, as well as the Alexander gardens which adjoin them, are covered with magnificent trees. The city itself is full of green spots, for in its very heart there are large gardens; and the most varied effect is produced by the coloured roofs of the houses, of which some are light-green, others dark-red.

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\* Except for less than an hour in the early morning, when the wood in the stoves is being charred. After that the chimneys are closed from above.



Equally astonishing, though less perfect as pictures, are the views from the tower of Ivan Veliki, to describe which would be to describe all Moscow, to say nothing of the environs. This "golden-headed giant" forms one of the corners of the celebrated "Square of the Cathedrals," which represents all that is most sacred in the Sacred Kremlin. At its foot lies the "great bell of Moscow," whose dimensions travellers have not found it worth while to exaggerate, and which is twenty feet seven inches high and twenty-two feet eight inches in diameter, while it weighs no less than 12,327 pouds.\* It was cast in the reign of the Empress Anne, and during the process the inhabitants of Moscow threw gold and silver into the furnaces, of which there were four. This Bell, or "Kolokol"—"Tzar Kolokol," "King Bell," it is called—at present stands on a pedestal of masonry, against which lies a fragment broken from the monster's side. Out of this another excellent bell might be formed, as Eve was formed out of Adam's rib. The story of the bell having been hung in a belfry, and, consequently, of its having fallen during the conflagration of that belfry, and buried itself in the ground, is probably a fable. No traveller appears to have seen it hanging; and a careful examination of the conflicting statements on the subject will show that

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\* A poud is equal to thirty-six English pounds.



it was cast in the hole where it lay until some fifty years since, and that the breach in the side was the result of a flaw in the casting. Another enormous bell actually hanging in the tower of Ivan Veliki, and which is used on very important occasions, such as the festivals of Easter and Christmas, or the coronation of an emperor, was brought in triumph from Novgorod when that city was sacked and its republic destroyed by the Tzar Ivan IV. Mr. Bayard Taylor, who is *sans peur*, like his illustrious namesake, but not always *sans reproche* on the score of accuracy, states that the sound of this bell is as loud as the report of several pieces of cannon. It appeared to me far less loud ; but possibly the waves of air put into motion by its harmonious vibrations would extend nearly as far as those produced by the dull roar of artillery. Standing in the belfry by the side of the ringers—who strike the clapper against the side—every fibre in my body seemed to tremble when a bell of far less dimensions than those of the Novgorod giant was being sounded. The second largest of the series of thirty-two bells which occupy the various stories of Ivan Veliki—singly at the top, and lower down in clusters of two, three, and four—fell towards the end of February, 1855, breaking through the flooring of the chamber in its terrible descent, and killing several members of the custodian's family, who lived immediately underneath on the ground-floor. The catastrophe, sad enough in itself,



was regarded as the omen of a far greater calamity ; and the day afterwards the news was received in Moscow of the Emperor Nicholas's death.

The tower of Ivan Veliki stands apart from the cathedrals ; and in many of the ancient Russian churches the belfry is thus separated entirely from the body of the building.

The three principal cathedrals of the Cathedral-square are those of the Assumption, the Annunciation, and the Archangel Michael. The space between these edifices is enclosed by an iron railing, and the square altogether is scarcely larger than the court-yard of St. James's Palace. The most striking peculiarity in the Russian churches and cathedrals is the number and singular form of the cupolas. The prototype of these bulbous domes is neither found in the cathedral of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, nor in the most ancient churches of Greece, Asia Minor, and the Archipelago. Some writers have attempted to trace their origin to China, but the Chinese cupolas are concave, while those of Russia are convex ; besides which, the Chinese owe what monuments they possess to the Mongols. To some, who have supposed that the model of the Russian cupola may have come from Asia, it has been objected, probably without reason, that a warlike, nomadic race like the Tartars, living in camps, and not in cities, could scarcely have been in a position to teach architecture to the nations they had conquered. It is known, how-



ever, that in Persia there are tombs surmounted by cylinders, with cupolas at the top, the form of which is very like those of Russia ; and there is certainly a great resemblance between the cupolas and belfries of Moscow and the domes and minarets of Delhi and all the principal cities of Hindostan. Count de Laveau, secretary to the Moscow Imperial Society of Naturalists, concludes, in his description of that city, that the body of the Russian churches is Byzantine, that the cupolas have been borrowed from the East, and that the architectural ornaments are of a mixed style, modified according to the taste of the century to which the Italian or German architects who constructed them belonged. As a general rule, every church has five cupolas ; one at each corner of the building, which is in the form of a Greek cross, and one larger one, of precisely the same form, in the centre. The illustrious Nikon, patriarch of Moscow, who restored the correct text of the Russian Bible, into which, through the carelessness and ignorance of copyists, numerous errors had crept, and who thereby created a body of dissenters (*raskolniki*), still faithful to the old and incorrect version—was accused of having introduced churches with five cupolas instead of one, as if to symbolize the four Eastern patriarchs, with himself in the middle, the greatest of all. The five cupolas, however, existed long before in the church of Saint Sophia at Novgorod ; and they are evidently imitated from the churches



of Constantinople. Of the most celebrated of these the Novgorod St. Sophia is known to be a copy. Although five is by far the most usual number of the domes on a Russian church, some have three, some two, some only one. Others have as many as seven, and the fantastic "Vassili Blagennoi," outside the Kremlin, possesses no less than thirteen. In this extraordinary edifice every variety of colour is employed; and the towers and cupolas are of all conceivable and inconceivable forms. Of the former none are regular; of the latter none are smooth, like the ordinary onion-shaped domes. One of the cupolas is cut in facettes like a pine-apple, another is striped like a melon, a third is in folds like a turban, and a fourth suggests an artichoke. As a whole, the church may be compared to a mass of stalactites reversed. A popular legend relates that Ivan the Terrible, for whom Vassili Blagennoi was built, put out the eyes of the architect, to prevent his repeating it. However that may have been, it is at present quite unique.

Each dome in the Russian churches is surmounted by a slender gilt cross, secured and adorned by thin gilt chains. On many of them a crescent is seen beneath the cross, this superposition of the emblem of Christianity over that of Mahomedanism being intended as a symbol of the triumph of the Russians over their Tartar oppressors. The exterior walls are sometimes covered with frescoes; or they are painted uniformly



in green or dark-red, and occasionally in some other colour. The church of one of the convents near Moscow has dove-coloured walls and silver domes.

Another peculiarity of the Russian churches, is their smallness compared with those of other countries. This may be explained by the severity of the Russian climate. As in all the Eastern churches, the interior is completely divided into two unequal portions by the iconostasis, behind which is the "holy of holies," inaccessible to women. The iconostasis is covered all over with "images." It has three doors communicating with the altar—two at the sides for the clerks and members of the choir, and one in the middle through which the priest comes forth to offer the sacrament to the congregation, to read the Gospel, or to preach. The choir stand in two divisions on each side of a raised space in front of the iconostasis. These semi-choruses chaunt the responses alternately, but sing the canticles and psalms together. The church music is for voices alone. Much of it is very beautiful, and no one who has once heard them can forget the effect of the simple responses in the Litany. The high voices sing only the third, repeated several times, and alternately the second and fourth notes of the scale, always ending on the third; the other voices producing successively the tonic, the sub-dominant, the dominant, and finally the tonic chord.

There are no seats in the interior. The congregation



kneel on the ground, without any distinction between rich and poor.

The service of the Russian is precisely the same as that of the Greek Church, except that it is performed in old Russian or Slavonian instead of modern Greek, and that the music of the chaunts is different. Indeed, the service is the same in all the Eastern churches; and when the Church of Georgia which had stood alone since the fourth century, was united seventy years since to that of Russia, it was found that not the slightest variation existed between the two rituals, even to the smallest ceremonies.

The difference between the Russian and other Eastern Churches is one not of doctrine nor of ceremony, but only of hierarchy. Each of the other Eastern Churches has a patriarch at its head, while that of Russia, though it has never ceased to hold intimate communion with the Church of Constantinople, from which it derived its faith, is governed by a synod of archimandrites and metropolitans, under the superintendence of the Emperor, aided by a procurator. The procurator of the holy synod is or was the distinguished writer Mouravieff, author of a history of the Russian Church,\* "Letters on the Ritual of the

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\* Mouravieff's History of the Russian Church has been translated into English by the Rev. Mr. Blackmore, who was for many years English chaplain at Cronstadt.



Orthodox Eastern Church," "A Journey to the Holy Places," and "A Journey to the Holy Places of Russia." M. Mouravieff held the rank of chamberlain, equivalent to that of cavalry general. Hence the ingenious statements published in France and England during the Crimean war, to the effect that the direction of the Russian Church was in the hands of a cavalry officer, who was in the habit of going down to the synod in his jack-boots, and of treating the bishops and archbishops in true barrack-room style. Although in the importance it attaches to ceremonials, in the practice of confession, and in some other respects, the "Orthodox" Church resembles that of Rome, and differs from that of England, there are fewer differences between Anglicans and Greeks—above all, Russo-Greeks—than between Anglicans and Romans, or Romans and Greeks. In William III. and Peter the Great's reign, when a correspondence took place between the English bishops and the Russian synod, with a view to the union or rather communion of the two Churches, the only point of disagreement that remained after several epistles had been exchanged was on the subject of images, or eikons; and the Russian synod had just explained themselves satisfactorily on this point, when the project of alliance was suddenly brought to an end—merely interrupted, as it was thought at the time—by Peter's death. It is almost needless to say, that in the Eastern Church



images are not themselves objects of adoration ; indeed, the believer is expressly cautioned against such an abuse of the holy eikons in the catechism published by the metropolitan of Moscow, Philaret. But it is equally certain that special virtues are attached by the ignorant and superstitious—or let us rather say, the superstitious, of whom numbers are far from being ignorant in the ordinary sense of the word—to particular paintings, as to relics and charms. Thus, on moving to a new house, every devout inhabitant of Moscow feels it necessary to receive a visit from the large, highly-decorated, richly-jewelled picture of the Iberian Virgin,\* formerly of Mount Athos, and now of the little chapel outside the gate leading to the Red Place. Any other picture of the Virgin would be considered less efficacious ; in proof of which it need only be mentioned that the Iberian Virgin is frequently engaged all day long, and that the faithful will put themselves to any inconvenience, and receive her visit at any period of the night, or early morning, when she happens to be free, rather than dispense with it. In the cathedral of the Assumption is the image of St. Antiopos, the martyr, to whom, or rather to which, it is only necessary to pray, in order to be cured of the

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\* The Iberian Virgin, like the metropolitan, always rides in a coach-and-six ; her postilions have their heads [uncovered, but in winter they are allowed to wrap handkerchiefs round them.



most inveterate toothache ; certainly, it would not be considered that any other portrait of St. Antiopos would serve the same purpose. Nor do worshippers confine themselves, in accordance with the precept of the Church, to invoking the intercession of saints. They pray to them directly and finally for certain special objects. Indeed, the general body of the laity cannot be expected to understand the very fine distinctions drawn for them by the clergy. A member of the Eastern Church may worship an image, provided the image be painted, but not graven. On the other hand, graven images and statues must not only not be worshipped, they must not even be introduced into a church, though *bassi* and *alti relievi* are both tolerated : the figures may be in the highest possible relief as long as they are not detached from the wall. In the same way there is nothing in the doctrines of the Greek Church to justify prayers for the dead, but, nevertheless, the dead are prayed for. Nor, according to its teaching, is the Virgin worthy of that adoration which she in practice receives.

Not only is celibacy not enforced on the clergy, except in the higher ranks, the occupants of which are appointed from the monasteries, but the parish priest is obliged to be married before he can be ordained. I have seen it stated that the parish priest—who cannot be married a second time—must, on the death of his wife, retire to a monastery ; but I know, of my own



knowledge, that this is not the case. At the same time, as the priest cannot obtain any advancement without entering a monastery, many priests, as widowers, adopt a course which, as married men, would not have been open to them.

The Sacrament—to mention another difference between the Greek and Latin Churches—is in the former administered to the laity in both kinds; and there are other divergences on purely doctrinal points, such as the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father *through* the Son, and not from the Father *and* the Son. But, in spite of all this—to say nothing of the fact that the authority of the Pope has never been recognized by the Russians, and that, as in England, the sovereign of the country is the head of the Church—an Italian would certainly find the religious customs of Russia far more in accordance with his notions of orthodoxy than an Englishman would with *his*. If the English bishops had ever visited Russia, their correspondence with the holy synod would probably have been very brief. But, looking at the two from an Anglican point of view, it is impossible not to admit that the Græco-Russian has decided advantages over the Roman Church. Thus, by the former the service is performed in the national tongue, and the Scriptures are allowed to circulate freely. It is true that the Church-Slavonian differs much from the modern Russian. But the peasants,



whose invariable instructor, when they have one at all, is the village priest, are taught to read the old before the modern language.

A certain Russian version of the Scriptures is said to have been prohibited some years since, by the advice of the late Philaret, metropolitan of Moscow, but only for the same reasons which induced Nikon to object to the more ancient of the Slavonian versions. It was, said my informant, full of inaccuracies. The author of "Russia by a Recent Traveller," states that Philaret once interfered to prevent the sale of a geological work, on the ground that its account of the creation of the world differed from that contained in Genesis. This does not agree with the fact that the metropolitan of Moscow gave every countenance to the professor of natural history at the Moscow University, when some of the priests had suggested that his lectures ought to be discontinued, nor with his publication (shortly after the suggestion in question) of his commentaries on Genesis, in which the theory of the world's creation in periods, and not in days, is set forth.

Philaret had the reputation of being the most learned, eloquent, and enlightened prelate of the Russian Church, as he was also, at the time of his death, the oldest. I find from his published sermons, that one of the best, "The Voice in the Wilderness," was delivered in 1812, and that it has an indirect reference



to the calamity which had just fallen upon Moscow. On one occasion, at the Troitza Monastery, of which the metropolitan of Moscow is archimandrite, Philaret preached a remarkable sermon to the Emperor Nicholas on the duties of a sovereign, which of course never was published. When Alexander II. issued his first circular to the nobles in reference to the emancipation of the peasants, Philaret delivered, at the Tchoudoff Monastery in the Kremlin, an admirable address concerning the duties of the various classes to the Emperor, and of the landed proprietors to serfs. This discourse was published in the Russian papers, and a translation of it appeared in one of our own journals, and has since been reprinted by the Rev. Mr. Christmas in his "Preachers and Preaching."

Philaret, when I first saw him in 1857, was already nearly eighty years of age. He was then a little emaciated old man, with delicate features, long white hair, sunken eyes, and no voice. When he began his sermon he was literally inaudible; but gradually, as he warmed with his theme, his tongue became loosened, his eyes brightened, and his words produced the most powerful effect on his hearers. The last time I heard him in the Tchoudoff Monastery, although he performed the service, he was unable to deliver his sermon, which was read for him by one of the attendant clergy, who stood by the metropolitan's side on the



steps in front of the iconostasis. At the conclusion of the sermon the congregation, which filled the monastical church in every part, crowded towards the metropolitan to receive his blessing and kiss his hands. Philaret was said to lead a life of almost unexampled abstemiousness, both as regards food and sleep. He worked incessantly, and visited the slightest shortcoming on the part of any of his clergy with great severity. This made the Moscow people say of him that his daily fare consisted of "one gudgeon and three priests."

Augustin, Archbishop of Moscow, is remembered by the discourses which he delivered in the presence of Alexander and the Moscow militia in 1812. Innocent, Archbishop of Odessa, preached a series of eloquent sermons to the garrison of Sebastopol during the siege. The greater part of these were afterwards published in one of the St. Petersburg reviews. A very remarkable sermon delivered by Innocent, many years since, on a Good Friday, has been published by Baron Haxthausen in his valuable work on Russia. As the baron's German version, of which the substance was furnished to him by a Russian student, is, as it at present stands, somewhat, inexact, I do not hesitate to give a literal translation of it. It must be understood, that on Good Friday a coffin is placed in a conspicuous part of the church, to remind the congregation of the Saviour's agony and death.

"Once a pious hermit had to say something to his



brethren, who were waiting to be instructed by him. Penetrated with a deep sense of the poverty of mankind, the old man, instead of any kind of instruction, exclaimed, 'Brethren, let us weep!' and they all fell upon the ground, and poured forth tears. I know, brethren, that you now expect words of instruction from me; but my lips involuntarily close at the sight of our Lord sleeping in the coffin. Who dare speak while He is silent? And can anything be said to you of God and His truth, and of man and his untruth, than which these wounds are not a hundredfold more piercing? Those who are not affected by them, can they be moved by the feeble word of man? On Golgotha there was no preaching; there, there was only sobbing and smiting of breasts. And by the side of the coffin is no place for preaching, but for repentance and tears. Brethren, our Lord and Saviour is in the coffin! Let us pray and weep!"

Moscow, which, according to tradition, had at one time "forty times forty" churches, has lost the greater portion of them in the terrible conflagrations which, from time to time, in peace as in war, have ravaged the city. At present it possesses upwards of six hundred churches, and about a dozen monasteries. The most celebrated religious edifice in Moscow, and perhaps in all Russia, is the Cathedral of the Assumption, where the Emperors are crowned, and which forms the north side of the square in the Kremlin. Its



foundation dates from 1325, and it was originally built by an architect from Byzantium. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, when the Greek empire had ceased to exist, the cathedral was nearly in ruins. The Russians, who had hitherto depended upon Constantinople for all their architects and artists, determined to rebuild it themselves, but two years afterwards the edifice fell to pieces. Then Aristotle of Bologna (Fioraventi) was sent for. On his arrival the Italian was sent to examine the cathedral at Vladimir, which, though nearly destroyed by the Tartars, was esteemed by the Russians as a model of religious architecture. On his return to Moscow, Aristotle commenced the cathedral which exists at the present day, and it was consecrated in 1479. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* (No. 51) has justly remarked, that although some of the exterior ornaments of this cathedral may have been borrowed from the churches of Lombardy, it cannot, speaking generally, be said to present any characteristics of the Italian style of architecture. This writer observes, that in some respects it bears more resemblance to our Saxon and Norman churches. The porch of the southern entrance, for instance, is very like those seen in old English churches; the narrow-arched windows are Old-English, and the rows of arches all round the building, at a considerable height from the ground, may be looked upon as a Norman decoration. The body of the



building, as in the church of St. Sophia at Novgorod and in all the Byzantine churches, is almost square; and the gilt roof is supported by four enormous pillars, covered all over with paintings. The Cathedral of the Assumption, though larger than the majority of churches in Russia, holds but a small congregation. It is upwards of a hundred feet long, and less than a hundred feet broad; and when the present Emperor was crowned, it was impossible to find accommodation in it for more than eight hundred spectators.

Nearly every painting and ornament in this cathedral is associated with some important event in Russian history. The chapels of St. John and St. Peter were founded in 1328, to commemorate the suppression of an insurrection. The Glorification of the Virgin—in the painted ceiling of the centre cupola—was executed in 1425, in celebration of the repulse of the Tartars, who had advanced to the banks of the Oka, some twenty miles from Moscow. Close to the relics of St. Philip, the metropolitan who braved the fury of Ivan the Terrible, and reproached him openly with his cruelties (to which he owed his exile, and, it is thought, his assassination), is the image of the martyr Dmitri, who suffered death at the hands of the Tartars; and among the tombs of the metropolitans are those of Philaret and Hermogenes, who were thrown into prison by the Poles for refusing to sanction the accession of Ladislas, the Polish prince, to the Russian



throne.\* The sacristy contains a gold cross, said to have belonged to the Emperor Constantine, which Peter the Great wore at Pultava, and which is said to have saved him from an otherwise fatal bullet. The miraculous image of the Virgin of Pskoff was surrounded with diamonds in 1740 by Anna Ivanovna, in honour of her victories over the Turks and Tartars; and there is another Virgin offered by the same sovereign, in celebration of the capture of Dantzic and the happy termination of the war (1733) against the French and Poles. Some of the richest vases in the cathedral were given by Catherine II. in memory of victories over the Turks; and a magnificent tabernacle, which, at various times, has contained the most important archives of Russia, was presented by Prince Potemkin, after one of his battles in the south. This tabernacle represents Moses receiving the Tables of the Law on Mount Sinai; it is about three feet high and eight or nine inches broad, and is made entirely of gold and silver, containing nineteen pounds of the former and twenty of the latter metal. A silver lustre,

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\* Hermogenes died soon after his arrest. Philaret, after the final expulsion of the Poles, was carried away captive by them in their retreat from Moscow (1612), and was kept nine years a prisoner in Poland. On his return to Russia, Philaret found his son, Michael Feodorovitch, the first of the Romanoffs, elected to the throne. It must be added, that Philaret was the metropolitan's monachal name, and that he had originally been christened Feodor. Hence "Michael Feodorovitch" (the son of Feodor).



weighing four thousand pounds, given to the cathedral by the Empress Catherine, was carried away by the French in 1812 ; it has since been replaced by another, weighing about eight hundred pounds, made from a portion of the original silver, which the Cossacks took back during the retreat. On the left of the holy gate is the celebrated Virgin painted by the evangelist St. Luke, sent to Russia nearly a thousand years since from Constantinople. It is known as the Virgin of Vladimir (the ancient capital),\* and is said to have been removed to Moscow in 1395. The whole of the precious stones by which it is surrounded are valued at 200,000 roubles, and the largest of the diamonds is alone said to be worth 80,000. The Russians acknowledge only two other Virgins by St. Luke, of which one is in the Morea, the other in the island of Cyprus ; but this computation would, of course, not be accepted by the Latin Church. The St. Luke's Virgin at Moscow has a black face, and appears to have three hands, which proves that St. Luke, though a physician, was not an anatomist. Montaigne speaks of the Veronica ("true image") seen by him in Italy as "having a face of a sombre and obscure colour, in a square like a great mirror."

The other most important eikons in the Cathedral of the Assumption are that of the Saviour, given by the Greek Emperor Emanuel (the Saviour is represented

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\* Kieff, Vladimir, Moscow, were in succession the capital of Russia.



sitting on a throne, holding in his left hand the Gospel of St. John), and that of the Assumption of the Virgin, painted by Peter, the first metropolitan of Moscow. The visitor to this cathedral cannot fail to be struck by the curious picture of "The Last Judgment," in which sinners are represented dancing on hot coals, with hooks through their tongues, &c. Probably this very original painting is kept in memory of the one which is said to have determined the conversion of Prince Vladimir, to the Christian faith, and which was painted by St. Methodius. Vladimir, Grand Prince of Kiev, being in want of a religion, applied for information as to the faith of each to a Jew, a Mahomedan, a Christian of the Western, and a Christian of the Eastern Church. To the Jew, Vladimir objected that his nation, dispersed throughout the world, was evidently forsaken of God; to the Mahomedan, that his religion forbade the use of wine. After he had sent ambassadors to Rome and Constantinople, and had been told by them that at the former city they were much impressed by the solemnity of the service, but that at the latter they heard songs of angels, and were transported to another world, an eikon, representing the reward of the blessed and the punishment of the wicked, was shown to the grand prince, and this decided him to embrace the Greek faith.

The Cathedral of the Archangel Michael is celebrated as the burial-place of the Russian grand princes and



tzars. Here lie the remains of Michael of Tchernigoff, who was slain by Batu Khan for refusing to kneel to the Mongol idols; of the Tzar Vassili Shouiski, who died a prisoner in Poland, where his body remained twenty-three years; and of Peter, the son of the Tzar of Kasan, taken prisoner by the Russians. The tomb of Ivan the 'Terrible is covered with a black cloth, a distinction due to the fact of that bloodthirsty monarch having assumed the cowl half an hour before his death. The walls of this church are covered with frescoes representing various grand princes and tzars, Michael Palæologos, the Greek emperor, and others. In ancient times it was the custom, in presenting a petition, to enter this church, and lay the document on the coffin of one of the tzars, whence no one but the sovereign dared to remove it.

The Cathedral of the Annunciation is the third of the great cathedrals which, with the tower of Ivan Veliki and the terrace of the palace, form the grand square of the Kremlin. It is remarkable for its floor of agate and its nine cupolas, which, like the roof, are richly gilt. The cross of the centre cupola (through which the church receives a faint, mysterious light) is, according to popular tradition, of solid gold. All the interior of the Annunciation, and the walls of the vestibule by which it is approached, are covered with frescoes, which date from the end of the fifteenth century (the original church dates from the end of



the fourteenth), and are highly interesting as specimens of Byzantine art. The frescoes represent sacred subjects, around which the painter has placed portraits of various philosophers and historians of Greece, such as Aristotle, Anacharsis, Zeno, Plutarch, Thucydides, and even Menander. It is sufficiently tolerant to admit a pagan comic dramatist into a Christian cathedral; but lest any one should go so far as to mistake either of the Greek sages for saints, the artist has written the name underneath each figure, besides which they are painted without haloes. In their hands are rolls on which sentences from the Gospel are inscribed, as if to indicate that the wisdom of the Greek philosophers arose from a prescience of the Christian doctrines. These paintings were restored during the reign of Peter the Great, and again retouched in 1770, under Catherine II., who gave special orders that the style should in no way be interfered with.

Each of the cathedrals in the Kremlin was desecrated, one way or another, by Napoleon. Many of the most precious pictures and relics were removed before the French entered, but the notches made by the invaders' knives are still visible in the gold frame of one of the pictures in the Annunciation. "They thought it was brass," said, with a smile, the custodian, who pointed out to me the curiosities of the cathedral—and perhaps, after all, they were right. The Assumption was



turned into a stable, and Napoleon caused the coffin of St. Jonas the patriarch to be opened, that he might see whether his "uncorrupted body" (as the Russians say of their saints) was really incorrupt; "but," says Anton Antonovitch, a devout Russian, who kindly supplied me with many interesting particulars respecting the holy places of his country and of whom some account will be found in a future chapter "the saint, shook his finger at him, and the Emperor started back in terror." The Kremlin was mined by the French in several places, but the numerous explosions which took place did not destroy any of the most important buildings. Several towers, however, were thrown down, and the gate of St. Nicholas, with a turret which surmounts it, was split from the base to the summit. An inscription on this gate states that the eikon of St. Nicholas affixed to the porch sustained no injury from the explosion, nor was the glass broken, nor the fire which burns perpetually before it extinguished. Another tradition tells how a cannon was placed opposite the holy gate, and fired three times in succession at its tutelary image; the third time the gun burst, and killed several of the artillerymen. On the other hand, the Kremlin possesses a striking memorial of Napoleon's retreat, in the shape of 875 cannons, of which 365 were taken from the French, 189 from the Austrian, 123 from the Prussian, and the remainder from the Italian,



Neapolitan, Bavarian, Westphalian, Saxon, Hanoverian, Würtembergian, Spanish, Dutch, and Polish troops. These pieces are at present placed in rows in front of the arsenal. Many of them are remarkable for their pretentious names, which contrast strangely with their present humble position. Thus they are inscribed the "Eagle," the "Conqueror," the "Invincible," &c. It has been proposed that these pieces, of which the collective weight is about 350 tons, should be melted down, and employed in the erection of a commemorative column; but they are far more suggestive, instructive, and generally interesting in their present form. It is right to add, that the proposition in question proceeds from a Frenchman.

In front of a second arsenal are a decreasing and increasing series of colossal cannons, arranged in line, with the longest at the extremities, and the shortest in the centre, so that the muzzles describe an arc. The largest of these might have formed part of the terrible artillery imagined by Milton in "Paradise Lost." It is a four-thousand-eight-hundred-pounder, and weighs forty tons. The monster, however, is in all probability as harmless as the marble lions in the Alhambra. It has apparently never been fired, and is reported to be anything but a serviceable arm; but for all that, it is a miracle of casting. An inscription on the gun informs us that it was cast in 1586 by a Russian master-founder named Chokoff, and by the



orders of the Tzar Feodor; and close to the muzzle the tzar is represented on horseback, crowned and sceptred. Of these seven gigantic pieces (a most unmusical gamut, if they were to be fired) the smallest weighs nearly four tons.

At the back of the arsenal is the Imperial treasury, of which the interior is perhaps the most generally interesting sight in the Kremlin. This museum is full of personal and political memorials, connected with the history of Russia, while it derives an archaeological, and, to a certain extent, an ethnological value, from the fact that it contains the crowns, robes, armour, plates, &c., of all the Russian tzars, with the arms used at various periods by all the Western, and a very large number of the Eastern nations, including the Mongols and several of the Siberian tribes. The term "barbaric splendour" is sometimes applied thoughtlessly, by writers on Russia, to genuine artistic magnificence—by which the malachite vases in the Hermitage, and indeed nearly everything in the imperial palaces, are characterized; but it may be applied with propriety to the massive gold plate of the Russian tzars. Costly to the last degree of extravagance, the dishes, platters, spoons, and goblets have no merit of design whatever. They are only interesting in so far that they prove the gold spoons, dishes, &c., of the tzars to have been indetical in shape with the wooden ones of the peasants, as retained by them



to the present day. Some of the most remarkable historical objects in the treasury are the crown of Prince Vladimir Monomachus, sent to him from Byzantium by the Emperor Alexis Commenus, in 1116; a crown, nearly two centuries older, which is said to have been given by the Greek Emperor to the Princess Olga, who was baptized at Constantinople in 946, shortly before the general conversion of Russia; the crowns of Astrakhan, Kasan, Siberia, Georgia, and lastly that of Poland. In another room are the Polish crown jewels and two thrones, removed from Warsaw, by order of Nicholas, after the suppression of the insurrection of 1830. In the vestibule of another portion of the treasury (the armoury) is the portrait of the Emperor Alexander I., at the foot of which lies a casket. The portrait is surrounded by two fasces of flags, one of which is composed of the standards borne by the Russians against the Poles; the other, of those borne by the Poles in their attempt to regain their liberty. The casket contains the Polish Constitution granted by Alexander I., and abolished by Nicholas, who caused the document to be forwarded from Warsaw to its present resting-place. The flags on each side of the portrait are, doubtless, intended to explain the presence of the casket at its foot. In the same apartment are a quantity of halberds, with which the monks of the Troitza Monastery, near Moscow, defended their walls against the Poles in



1612. Two other highly-interesting memorials in this museum are the litter on which Charles XII. was carried at Pultava, before he took to his horse ; and a trunk and camp-bed belonging to Napoleon, which formed part of the baggage captured or left behind in 1812.

But the whole of the Kremlin generally, and in detail, is full of interest. I have said nothing of the monasteries, the synod, the senate, and various public offices which it contains. Of the Imperial palace I will say a few words in connection with one of the most original and least known of those entertainments which the sovereign of Russia gives his subjects in honour of his coronation. I mean the masked ball at the Kremlin, of which the first peculiarity is that no one wears a mask, the second being that no one dances.

There are no signs whatever remaining of the ancient masquerade ; though, owing to the great variety of costume to be met with (especially among the women) in the immense dominions of the Tzar, of which every portion seemed to be represented, the entertainment has the appearance of an unusually fancy-dress ball. The only semblance of dancing that now remains is a promenade executed to the music of a *polonaise*, and led by the Emperor himself, who gives his hand to the Empress, to one of the principal ambassadresses, or to some other lady of distinction. The rooms thrown open on the occasion are six in



number, two of which are in the Terema or ancient apartments of the Tzar, the others forming part of the New Palace which was built by the Emperor Nicholas, and which adjoins the Terema.

At one end of the suite is the Granovitaya Palata, the throne-room of the Terema, in which the imperial banquet took place, immediately after the coronation. At the other extremity is the Hall of St. Andrew, the throne-room of the New Palace.

The Granovitaya Palata is celebrated as the ancient reception-room of the Tzars. Here they were in the habit of receiving their future brides; and a small window near the ceiling is shown, through which the Moscow princes, with more prudence than propriety, are said to have observed the young ladies at leisure while they were preparing to meet their intended husbands. On the occasion of the ball to the people, this apartment was hung with crimson velvet, studded all over with gold eagles, as on the coronation-day; otherwise, its vaulted roof, and its simple, massive architecture, would have presented a striking contrast to the brilliancy and richness of the apartments in the New Palace. On one side of the room were the thrones used for the coronation, which had been removed for the occasion from the Cathedral of the Assumption. Nearly opposite the throne an enclosure had been formed by means of a light railing, within which the Emperor retired for a few minutes after making his



promenade through the entire suite of rooms, commencing with the Hall of St. Andrew. The said enclosure contained a few chairs, a card-table with cards, a chalk pencil for marking the points, and a little hard, sharp brush for rubbing out the chalk marks. This compartment, however, is only a resting-place, and the only use of the cards is to aid in giving the appearance of a ball-room to the solemn magnificent apartment, in which no one dances.

Of the apartments in the New Palace, the Hall of St. George is the most brilliant; in my opinion, altogether the most beautiful. It is decorated—or rather left without decoration—in a style which is altogether Russian. Its alabaster walls are merely relieved by a thin delicate gold moulding, and its white ceiling by gilt stars of the order of St. George. It is entirely without furniture, if we except the white benches or elongated stools with gilt feet, which are seen in the recesses at the back of the magnificent colonnade which faces the window. This colonnade is composed of ten pillars, whose dazzling whiteness reflects the light in every direction. The hall is lighted not only by chandeliers, but also by a continuous row of wax lights, extending all round the room, and placed at intervals of just sufficient distance to prevent contact.

The Hall of St. Andrew seems to have been carved out of rose-coloured marble. It is profusely decorated



with gold ornaments, and is a most magnificent specimen of a palatial interior in the rich elaborated style, and probably, with the exception of the Apollo Gallery in the Louvre, the most magnificent in Europe. On one side of the hall is a row of immense looking-glasses, on the other a double row of windows, through the lower of which is seen a balcony or arched terrace, illuminated with Chinese lanterns of various colours.

The Hall of St. Vladimir is a sort of ante-room to the new apartments, as the Holy Vestibule is to the old. The latter exists now exactly as it was built by the Tzar Alexis Mikhailovitch (Peter's father), with the exception of the paintings which decorate the walls, and which were restored when the New Palace was erected. These paintings, without being of the Byzantine school, like nearly all the religious paintings of Russia, are eminently *præ-Raffaelian*. They represent "Constantine's Dream," "Joshua and the Angel," "The Patriarch Abraham receiving the Visit of the Holy Trinity," "Dmitri Donskoi being blessed by St. Sergius before his Victory over the Tartars," and "St. Vladimir, Duke of Kieff, listening to the Exhortations of the Monks, who are exhibiting to him the Picture of the Last Judgment,"—which, according to the Russian tradition, assisted materially in effecting his conversion to Christianity. The Emperor, as he walks from the Hall of St. Andrew to the Granovitaya Palata, and from the Granovitaya Palata to the Hall of St.



Andrew, is followed by the ambassadors, the principal officials of State, and afterwards by all who choose to take part in the procession: no one, however, doing so who is not either in uniform or in court dress. Every gentleman leads a lady by the hand. The crowd of spectators—or guests, as we ought to call them—form a line on each side of the *cortége*.

The Emperor is literally among his people, he is literally in contact with them; for as he raises his hand to reply by a salute to the enthusiastic shouts with which he is everywhere received, he is sometimes unable to do so without touching the person next to him. But it must not be imagined that there is any rushing, or even pressing. The people have too much respect for their Emperor and their host, who in his turn has full confidence in his subjects and his guests; for, as at all the other popular *fêtes* at Moscow, I noticed the entire absence of soldiers and police from among the people, and noticed too that their absence was appreciated. Those giants in bearskins under the colonnade are a party of Grenadiers of the court on duty at the palace, and having nothing to do with the question of order. And yet the persons who fill the six rooms of the palace belong to every class of society. Peasants, shopkeepers, and nobles, are all together in the room; and of the three orders, the moujiks are certainly the most numerous. They are wearing black and brown coats for this evening, but it is easy to see they will



not wear them to-morrow, and that the sheepskin will be resumed before the next twelve hours have expired.

The most curious thing to observe at this entertainment was the effect of the Emperor's presence on his subjects, and the familiarity with which he treated them. At this national *fête* he wore a thoroughly national costume—that of the rifle militia of the crown peasants, formed during the last war. The uniform consists of a caftan of dark-green cloth, tied round the waist with a red sash, loose trousers, also of dark green; and long boots of pliable leather, coming halfway up the calf, and worn outside the trousers. The costume is not complete without a red shirt, of which the edge is alone visible above the collar of the caftan, and a Polish fur cap, somewhat similar to those worn by the Russian coachmen during winter. The dress is admirable, as well for ease and comfort as for picturesqueness, and in the eyes of the Russians it has the additional advantage of being thoroughly national. Hence this corps is one of the most popular in the army.

During the pauses between the never-ending promenades *à la Polonaise*, both the Emperor and the Empress spoke freely to the persons around them. I believe the Emperor Nicholas has been seen to take the arm of a peasant, and walk about the room with him. The Emperor Alexander did not do this; he simply spoke a few words of kindness and encouragement to those who happened to be in the vicinity of



the card-tables by which he was standing. The individuals selected for this honour appeared (judging from the costume) to be in most cases natives of the more distant parts of the Russian Empire, and there can be no doubt that, however long their pilgrimage to the city of Moscow may have been, they must have felt more than compensated for any trouble or fatigue they may have undergone by so signal a mark of favour. All the people in the immediate neighbourhood of the Emperor were in a state of great excitement, and several of them actually shed tears after he had spoken to them.

And it must be remembered that this enthusiastic love of the people for their Emperor was manifested at a time when nothing was positively known of his intention to liberate the serfs. How would the peasants have received him if they had known of his project for their emancipation !

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## CHAPTER VI.

## KRILOFF AND THE RUSSIAN FABULISTS.

THERE are two monuments in the two capitals of Russia which, at first sight, puzzle and astonish the traveller from the West. I will suppose him to have arrived in Moscow by the Napoleonic route, through Warsaw and Smolensk. His first visit is, of course, to the Kremlin, outside which, in the middle of a large open space, he sees a group of statuary which represents Minin, of Nijni-Novgorod, calling upon Prince Pojarski, the cattle-dealer, to head a band of patriots and lead them against the Poles, at that time (1612) in possession of Moscow. There were no Russian balls given in London in the year 1612 for the benefit of distressed Muscovites ; but Russia was then in a very similar position, as regards Poland, to that which Poland has since occupied



with respect to Russia. This, in a vast majority of cases, is news to the traveller, who has in all probability been taught to look upon the partition of Poland as quite unjustifiable; whereas, whatever may be said of Austria, and of Prussia the originator of the scheme, it can be urged in defence of Russia that at the first division she simply settled a long-standing account with her ancient enemy.

In due time the traveller goes northward to St. Petersburg, where, if he is properly directed, one of his first walks will be along the magnificent quays which imprison the frequently insurgent Neva. Ascending the left bank from St. Isaac's Place, he will pass the cathedral of St. Isaac, the statue of Peter, the Taurida Palace (a present from Catherine to Potemkin), the broad approach to the interminable Nevski Perspective, the wonderful monolith known as the Alexander Column, the Winter Palace, facing which are the Admiralty with its golden spire, and the gloomy-looking fortress of Peter and Paul, the Hermitage, which is connected with the Winter Palace by a second Bridge of Sighs, and after walking a few hundred yards (which, thanks to the interest of the objects that arrest his attention at every step, will have appeared no appreciable distance), will come to the Summer Garden. The Summer Garden—which during the greater part of the year is abundantly rich in winter produce, the trees being laden with icicles and the ground covered



with a plentiful harvest of snow—is, in the season proper to it, the resort of all classes, but chiefly of little boys and girls, to whom it is what the garden of the Tuileries is to the nurseries of Paris, or Kensington Gardens to those of western London. The principal walks in the Summer Garden lead to one central spot, in which stands, or rather sits, a statue of a man who does not look much like a general, though of course soldiers are the only heroes that Russia cares to honour—a fact as well known as that intellectual superiority is systematically persecuted in that unhappy country. However, a great military commander would be represented either in uniform, or else as Mars without any uniform, and wearing nothing but a helmet, like Souvaroff, in the St. Petersburg Exercise Ground; or as Achilles, naked and defiant, like the Duke of Wellington in Hyde Park; whereas the Hero of the Summer Garden is attired in a dressing-gown, like Béranger in the portraits prefixed to the ordinary editions of his works, and, like Béranger, is an old man, and has a stoop in the shoulders and a look of *bonhomie* mingled with sly humour in the face. It is Kriloff, the most popular author Russia has produced, of whose works ten years ago more than eighty thousand copies had been sold. There was some meaning in placing his statue in the Summer Garden, where the children of St. Petersburg play and wander about for hours in the day, for there is not a child in Russia



who is taught anything in the way of books, that does not learn Kriloff's "Fables." The fable-writer is sitting in an arm-chair, supported by an immense pedestal, on the sides of which are medallions representing the subjects of his most celebrated fables; and these designs, which they can at once understand, are as interesting to the children as the pictures in one of their favourite "picture-books." At a first glance, a person knowing nothing of Kriloff might imagine, from the bears, foxes, lions, wolves, and other animals by which he is surrounded, that he was some eminent natural historian. I have already mentioned a capital sarcasm suggested by the *entourage* of Kriloff's statue to a distinguished Russian sculptor, who has been intrusted with the execution of a monument to Nicholas.

From what has been said about Kriloff's "Fables" being so much read by children, it must not be supposed that he was a writer of apologues adapted to the meanest capacity. Indeed, however much they may be amused by stories of foxes asking crows to sing, and of lambs defending themselves verbally against wolves, it is quite certain that children seldom understand the meaning of a fable, as is sufficiently shown by their notorious abhorrence of the "moral."

Kriloff is read by Russians of all ages and of all classes. On the occasion of his jubilee he had pro-



bably more honour paid to him by the authors and literary society of Russia than was ever offered to any writer in any country. At this celebration the Emperor Nicholas caused himself to be represented; and the object of so much attention was not a man who had flattered Russia or the Russians, but a satirist whose work, in the words of his compatriot, Nicholas Gogol, "contains severe lessons for every class in the empire, from the highest dignitary of State to the labourer of the lowest order."

Every remarkable nation seems to have some peculiar form of literature, which may not be that in which it most excels, but which is eminently characteristic of its genius. For instance, it would be an insult to France to say that the literary qualities of that nation are chiefly manifested in its vaudevilles, but it is none the less true that the vaudeville is a species of play which the French have cultivated to perfection, and which only thrives on French soil. Similarly, it would be absurd to say of England that its literary glory is concentrated in its great morning newspaper, though certainly no other country could bring out and support a journal like the *Times*. In the same way I may say of Russia, not that its greatest writers are its fabulists, but that in these modern times the fable has flourished in Russia as it has flourished in no other country, and that several Russian authors have attained peculiar excellence in that style of composition.



As the fabulist of fabulists was a slave, and as Kriloff wrote under a very despotic Government, it will probably strike many persons that the fabular form belongs essentially to a tyranny, and that it was adopted by the Russian writer as being the only one that would allow him to publish certain unpalatable truths, which, if presented without the least disguise, might have been pronounced objectionable by the censorship. This, however, will not account either for Kriloff, after his first success, confining himself, almost exclusively, to the composition of fables, nor for the great favour with which those fables were received. He would not, perhaps, in certain instances, have been read with so much avidity, but his literary reputation could scarcely have been less, if he had never produced a line that had reference to the evils of the Russian system of government.

Another thing which would seem to show that the fable in Russia may be regarded as, in some measure, a product of despotism, is the success achieved in that country by certain pieces of what may be called *practical satire*—a much milder form of protest than the mildest apologue, because it does not necessarily mean anything at all.

Let me explain. A student makes a lamp-shade out of the portrait of the Emperor Nicholas. An Englishman or Frenchman visiting this student for the first time sees merely the Emperor Nicholas's portrait



on a lamp-shade, but a Russian entering the room understands that the young man regards Nicholas as an obstacle to enlightenment.

At dessert a diner-out, tired of telling anecdotes, takes a quantity of nuts, and covers the bottom of his plate with them. On this broad foundation he places a smaller quantity of nuts; above that another layer smaller again, and so on, until he has built a pyramid, of which one solitary nut forms the summit. He then points out to the company that he has constructed the material similitude of the Russian Table of Ranks, or "Tchinns," with the Emperor above and the people beneath. The guests look, and probably do not admire, but the exhibitor has not yet finished. He shakes his plate, the nuts are all mixed together, and it is now impossible not to observe how much one nut is like another, and that those which occupied the highest positions cannot be distinguished from those which were at the bottom.

By a similar kind of device, Poushkin is said\* to have exemplified the proportion of Russian blood flowing in the veins of the reigning family. For Russian blood he took wine; for German, water; and showed

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\* By M. Golovin, by M. Prosper Mérimée (who perhaps borrows the anecdote from M. Golovin), and afterwards by a number of other writers.



how, through the continual addition of water, the presence of the wine was now scarcely recognizable in the mixture. Such a test of nationality (for the rest most imperfect) is, of course, one that no reigning family in Europe could stand; but the illustration, like that of the nuts, is, as far as it goes, ingenious and striking; and this, together with the impossibility of expressing anything of the kind in so many plain words, appears to have gained for both these "pleasantries in action" a very extended celebrity. But the fact is, the Russians are, and have always been, fond of quaint illustrations, of humorous allegories, and of such condensations of popular wisdom as are found in the picturesque proverbs of their country; and, appreciating jokes, it will be understood that they must, now and then, enjoy a quiet joke against their rulers, especially when we remember that it is with such weapons that they can attack them most successfully. But, provided they publish nothing that tends to bring the Emperor himself into disrespect, there is not, nor was there during the last reign, any reason why an author, wishing to expose the vices of the Russian administration, should do so only through the medium of fables. M. Cyprien Robert, Professor of Slavonian Literature at the College of France, says, with truth, that "on this subject the utmost latitude is allowed to popular criticisms; provided the person of the Tzar is spared, everything else is permitted. What Gogol has written about the



Muscovite administration could not have been printed in any German State.”\*

I consider, then, that in writing fables Kriloff simply followed the bent of his own natural genius, which was eminently Russian; but he, at the same time, took advantage of his favourite literary form to attack the vices of Russian ministers and officials, and sometimes even to give a hint to the Emperor himself. In Griboiedoff's comedy of *Gore ot Ouma* one of the principal personages enters “with a piece of good news,” which is to the effect that “in all lyceums, schools, and gymnasiums, nothing save military exercises is to be taught, and that books are to be reserved for grand occasions.” “If we mean to strike the evil at its root,” says another, “we must throw all the books into the fire.” “Not at all,” continues a third; “there are different kinds of books, but if I were censor, I should certainly be inexorable in regard to fables. I should dread them like the Evil One. They are full of jests about lions and eagles. Say what you will, these are animals, but also they are Tzars.”

Doubtless, Kriloff is the writer whose fables this official is represented as having “dreaded like the Evil One.” Doubtless, too, it is, in part, Kriloff's liberal tone that makes the author of “Revelations of Russia”

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\* *Le Monde Slave*, par Cyprien Robert.



speak of him in that work as "perhaps the first fabulist of any age or country, and, at all events, by far the most shining light of Russian literature ;" but it nevertheless appears certain that if Russia had been as free a country as England, Kriloff would still have written those of his fables which do most honour to his name.

I have said that the Russians have naturally a great liking for fables ; and, before Kriloff published a line, three Russian authors had already gained a high reputation as fable-writers. Of these, one was Soumarokoff, a poet of Catherine's time, chiefly known by his tragedies, the two others being Dmitrieff and Khemnitzer, Kriloff's contemporaries, but predecessors in literature. Dmitrieff was for many years Minister of Justice, and before his death, with characteristic good sense, published a final edition of his works, "corrected and *diminished*." It is interesting to know that Kriloff's earliest fables were submitted to Dmitrieff, who at once recognised their merit, and encouraged his competitor to pursue a path in which he soon eclipsed the glory of all his forerunners.

Khemnitzer commenced life as a surgeon, but, disliking that sanguinary profession, went into the army, and served in a campaign against the Turks. "This, however," he said, "was going out of the rain into the river." Afterwards he left the military service, and was appointed Consul at Smyrna. One of Khem-



nitzer's fables appears so strikingly Russian in tone, and is, moreover, so amusing, that I subjoin a translation of it, after which I shall confine my attention exclusively to Kriloff. The original, like all modern Russian fables, is in verse; but I shall not attempt to give a poetical version of it.

“ METAPHYSICS.

“ A father had heard that children were sometimes sent beyond the sea to be educated, and that he who had been beyond the sea could be at once distinguished from him who had not.

“ So, not to be behind others, the father decided to send his son across the ocean, that he might learn something useful; but the boy returned a greater dunce than before. He had fallen into scholastic hands, had had inexplicable things explained to him, but had learned nothing, and remained a fool.

“ Formerly in his simplicity the boy would talk of simple subjects, but now of the loftiest things and quite unreasonably. The dull did not understand him before, but now even the clever could make nothing of him, and his family, the town, and the whole world grew weary of his nonsensical talk.

“ Mad from metaphysical study, pondering on the old subject, seeking the beginning of all beginnings,



he was ascending into the clouds, when, as he proceeded along the road, he stumbled and fell into a pit.

“His father, who happened to be with him, ran to fetch a rope, with which to rescue Wisdom from the abyss and bring him up into the world again.

“In the meanwhile the clever youth sat in the pit, and reflected what could be the reason of his stumbling and falling into it. ‘The cause was probably an earthquake, and my rapid fall into the pit may be accounted for by central attraction and the pressure of the air.’

“The father came back with the rope. ‘Here,’ he said, ‘is a rope for you; take hold of it and I will pull you out. Hold fast!’

“‘No, do not pull yet; tell me first——’ and the student began to rave as usual—‘what manner of thing is a rope?’

“The father was not a learned man, but he possessed common sense; and without regarding the scientific side of the question, replied: ‘A rope is a thing for pulling out people who have fallen into a pit.’

“‘For such a purpose some other instrument should be invented,’ said the learned youth, continuing his own mode of talking; ‘and so this is a rope?’

“‘Time is necessary for what you propose,’ replied the father, ‘and it is lucky we have the rope here at hand.’

“‘And what is time?’ recommenced the son.



“‘ Ah ! time is a thing I shall not lose with a fool ; remain where you are,’ said the father, ‘ till I come again.’

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“ What if we were to collect all the utterers of absurdities and untruths, and throw them into a pit to keep company with this youth ? But we should want a large pit ! ”

I will now speak of Kriloff's writings and life, of which all that is interesting in the latter is closely connected with his career as a fabulist. Ivan Andreievitch Kriloff was born in Moscow, February 2nd, 1768. His father was a captain in the army, and during the insurrection of Pougatcheff was entrusted with the defence of Orenburg, where not only the captain himself, but also little Kriloff and his mother, were in considerable danger, for the Pretender swore that when he took the city he would put the commandant and all his family to death. Pougatcheff, however, was himself captured, and Captain Kriloff afterwards left the military for the civil service, and was made president of the magistracy at Tver, where he died when his son was only eleven years of age. Young Kriloff received all his early education from his mother, except such literary knowledge as he managed to acquire by reading very assiduously the books left by his father. He appears, when only fourteen years old, to have written a comic opera, of which the best his biogra-



phers can say is, that fortunately it was never published. What convinces me, however, that even at this early age the boy possessed considerable talent, is the fact that he sold his operetta to a publisher for sixty roubles. The bookseller who made so daring an investment was also a composer, and probably intended to set young Kriloff's libretto to music. Nothing, however, came of it, except that the youthful author received his sixty roubles, or rather, by his own wish, sixty roubles' worth of books which he chose himself from the publisher's shop, selecting among other works those of Molière, Racine, and Boileau. Probably it was the study of Racine that created in him a temporary taste for tragedy, which, however, led to no good result.

Kriloff had already entered the Government service. He remained in it until he was twenty-five, when he resigned his post, and for twelve years afterwards lived by contributing to various journals and magazines, occupying himself, at the same time, with the direction of a printing-office. One of his first enterprises in literature was a satirical journal, entitled "The Ghosts," in which, even then, the love of the Russians for everything foreign, and their constant use of French words in ordinary conversation, appear to have been favourite subjects of raillery. It was not until he was thirty-eight years of age that Kriloff wrote anything that gave promise of his future greatness ; but, in the mean-



while, he had seen much of the world, had read a great many French and German works, had learned Italian, and had even taught himself the violin, on which instrument he is said to have played as well as the best *virtuosi* of the day. This last accomplishment cannot, it is true, have aided Kriloff much in the composition of his fables; but it is interesting to know that he had the temperament and tastes of a musician, which, for the rest, might be guessed, not from the melody of his verse, which does not necessarily imply that the poet can tell one tune from another, but from certain subjects that he has treated, and from his mode of treating them.

After passing several years with Prince Serge Galitzin, Governor of Riga, first as secretary, and afterwards, when the prince had left the service, as tutor to his children, Kriloff went, in 1806, to Moscow, where he became acquainted with Dmitrieff, then at the height of his reputation. Kriloff translated, or rather imitated, La Fontaine's *Le Chêne et le Roseau* and *La Fille Difficile dans le Choix d'un Mari*, and showed them to the celebrated fable-writer, who, as we have already mentioned, encouraged his future rival, and assured him that he had at length discovered the style especially suited to his talent. From this time, with the exception of a brief return to his *premiers amours* in the following year, when he wrote another piece for the stage, Kriloff gave himself up entirely to



the composition of fables, and, in 1808, published his first collection, which, though it included only twenty-three specimens, at once made him famous. I need hardly say that after his first essays he no longer confined himself to imitations of La Fontaine, in which, as it appears to me, he is never so happy as in his own original compositions.

In reading these eternal reproductions of *Æsop*, it is curious to observe how each successive fabulist, unable to rival the terseness and plainness of the old Phrygian, has sought to improve upon him by adding new details to his simple, natural legends. Take the "Wolf and the Lamb," for instance, which, in *Æsop*, is told in a few lines. It is longer in *Phædrus*, longer still in *La Fontaine*, and longest of all in *Kriloff*. And though *Kriloff's* "Wolf and the Lamb" is very interesting, and contains some ingenious points, which are not to be found in the same fable as treated by his predecessors, it is not so good as *La Fontaine's*, which is not so good as that of *Phædrus*, which, finally, is not so good as that of *Æsop*. In the Latin, the French, and the Russian version, the Greek fable still appears as the essence. In all four the wolf complains that the lamb is troubling the stream; in all, the lamb replies that he is drinking below the wolf; in all, the wolf rejoins, that the lamb, "his father and mother, and all his hateful race, are industriously opposed to him;" and in all, the wolf ends by devouring the lamb. Nothing can



be added to the above, which is the substance of Æsop's fable, without appearing superfluous to all except those who consider, like the devoted admirers of La Fontaine, that the great merit of a fable lies in the style. Phædrus makes the wolf attack the lamb's family one by one. "Six months ago you spoke ill of me." "Six months ago I was not born." "Your father spoke ill of me," &c., all of which is amusing, but in no way increases the philosophic value of the fable. La Fontaine, as we have observed, again adds to the story, and Kriloff introduces, not only the lamb's relatives, but his shepherd, and the dogs of the flock, and makes the wolf, by way of conclusion, say cynically to his young friend, "If you have no other failing, you are in fault in so far that I am very hungry, and wish to eat you."

However, out of upwards of two hundred fables composed by him, Kriloff has not borrowed the subject of more than thirty, which, in the index to his book, are distinguished from the rest by means of asterisks affixed to the titles. And yet, because the groundwork (and in some cases the general form) of these thirty appears to have been taken from La Fontaine, M. Bougeault,\* and every French writer who

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\* Author of *Kriloff, ou le La Fontaine Russe; sa Vie et ses Fables*. Garnier Frères, Paris.



mentions Kriloff, calls him the Russian La Fontaine, whereas, if he is to be compared to any one, he is a Russian Æsop—the difference between Æsop and La Fontaine being, of course, that the former was a great inventor, whereas the latter invented nothing but some of the details, and occasionally the structure of his fables. M. Bougeault reminds us, with much *naïveté*, that M. Viennet also finds his own subjects, and asks whether he is, for that reason, to be set above La Fontaine. But this is like comparing the invention of a perambulator to that of the steam-engine. It may be readily admitted that neither M. Viennet, nor any one else, for that matter, could, out of the Horatian story of the “Town Mouse and the Country Mouse,” have composed such a charming fable as La Fontaine’s *Le Rat de Ville et le Rat de Campagne*; but it is equally certain that neither M. Viennet nor La Fontaine himself could have invented one of the best fables of Kriloff. The French call their La Fontaine the fable-tree—*le fablier*—which, however, would be a finer compliment if the fruit he bore had been his own. They argue as if the subject of a fable were nothing. In truth, however, it is everything. A good fable may be told in verse, in prose, in five lines or in twenty, and, as long as the subject is fairly presented, it will produce its effect.

The French (with the exception of M. Bougeault, who though he ranks Kriloff a little lower than La Fontaine,



has published, in the book previously mentioned, some excellent translations of Kriloff's fables) have indeed treated the Russian author very badly. In 1825, Count Orloff, wishing to spread the fame of his illustrious countryman throughout Europe, engaged a number of the most celebrated authors of France (not very rich in authors just then), and of Italy, to translate a hundred of Kriloff's fables into French and Italian verse. A volume was printed, in which each of the hundred fables was given, first in Russian, then in French, and then in Italian. The book was adorned with a portrait of Kriloff, and enriched by an introduction from the pen of M. Lemontey, of the Institute. The experiment was a curious one, and, as might have been foreseen, was attended with no success.

The work was performed in this manner:—First, Count Orloff prepared a literal version in French of the fables he wished to have versified; then the eminent writers took the Count's prose, put it into rhyme, and in so doing altered whatever they thought fit!\* One author went so far as to invent a moral of his own, which happened to be quite at variance with the meaning of the fable intrusted to his poetical guardianship. In the original, a groping, inquiring man, intended to typify the critic who, no matter in what sphere, has an eye

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\* Count Orloff was similarly assisted in the composition of his *Histoire de l'Opéra en Italie*.



only for the smallest details, has been to a museum of natural history, and comes back with an interminable account of the flies and beetles stuck on pins, and of all the entomological riches of the place. "And what did you think of the elephant?" his friend asks. The curious, minute observer goes on to describe the number of moths he has seen. "But that magnificent elephant?" repeats the friend. "To tell the truth," replies the "Inquiring Man" (which is the title of the fable), "the elephant, somehow or other, escaped my notice." The Russian fable has no "moral," and in supplying this apparent omission, the French writer has boldly taken the part of the "Inquiring Man," and has recorded his opinion that the vulgar alone admire what is great; and that the "true sage" takes eternal pleasure in the contemplation of minute perfection! M. Lemontey's introduction to the Orloff edition of Kriloff, of which the chief materials appear to have been supplied by the Count himself, is very interesting. The author explains the backwardness of Russia in civilization by the perpetual invasions, first of Tartars, and afterwards of Poles, from which the Muscovites suffered from the thirteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century; gives some account of the Russian language, and especially of its vast poetic resources; pays a compliment to Count Orloff, and sounds the praises of his collaborateurs, in the style of the Empire. The work has been executed "*par de graves écrivains*;" among whom



he mentions the Count de Ségur, "*Auteur d'une Histoire Universelle*;" Parseval-Grandmaison, "*Le Chantre de Philippe Auguste*;" Boissy d'Anglas, "*Le Plutarque de Malesherbes*," and so on. The most likely of the contributors were such men as Dumersan, Picard, and Duval, the comic dramatists; but all, in their "imitations," have gone far away from the originals, generally spinning them out to a most enfeebling length, and never troubling themselves in the least to follow the Russian author. Kriloff is never declamatory or emphatic, never says a word too much, and in his morals, especially, has the true brevity which belongs to wit. The French authors, however, have in some instances, as we have seen, tagged morals to his fables when they were not wanted (thus spoiling the entire design), and in others have extended a moral of two lines into a sermon of twenty. Let us show the reader, for instance, how Rouget de Lisle, one of the most conscientious of the French "adapters" engaged by Count Orloff, treated Kriloff's fable of "The Geese."

The geese are being driven to market rather hastily, for their master is late; and the fabulist explains that in certain cases neither geese nor men can be spared. A traveller is walking along the same road, and to him the flock complain as follows:—

" 'The low-born fellow little knows,  
When driving birds like us with blows,



That we descend from those great geese  
 Who once were praised in classic tome,  
 And will be praised till time shall cease,  
 As saviours of Imperial Rome.'

" 'Well, what of that? We all have heard the story;  
 Your ancestors saved Rome; to them the glory.  
 But what have you done?' quoth the curious stranger.  
 'Why, when the Roman city was in danger,  
 Our ancestors——'

'I know;  
 But show  
 What good yourselves have done?'  
 'Oh, none!'

" 'Then leave your ancestors alone,  
 Nor claim a glory not your own.  
 They saved, 'tis true, their native land,  
 But you, O vain inglorious band,  
 Are only fit  
 For the roasting spit!'

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"My fable's done; I could explain the text;  
 But no; our little goslings might be vexed."

Instead of this moral, of which the form is very novel, and which is, of course, very much better in the original than in my translation, M. Rouget de Lisle gives us five long lines,\* forgetting that the Russian author has only

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\* "Si je voulais mater les insolentes joies  
 De tant d'oisons sans palme, aux airs pleins de hauteur,  
 Quel texte à commenter! Chut! indiscret censeur,  
 Le temps présent est l'arche du Seigneur:  
 Ne faisons pas crier les oies."



supplied point for two. From this specimen, one of the least unfavourable that could be selected, the reader may judge how Kriloff fared at the hands of the other distinguished French writers who undertook to present him to their compatriots.

To finish with this particular branch of the subject, I will here give a few more examples of the happy manner in which Kriloff frequently introduces his morals. In a fable entitled "The Two Boys," a couple of youths are lamenting the impossibility of getting at some nuts with which a tree close to them is laden, the boughs being quite beyond their reach. One suggests that he shall climb on the shoulders of the other for the benefit of both, and in this way contrives to obtain an excellent position in the middle of the tree. The fortunate youth then begins to eat the nuts, but he only throws the shells to his companion. "Alas!" says Kriloff—

"Alas! my memory tells  
Of men thus raised to place,  
Who've not e'en had the grace  
To throw their friends the shells!"

In "The Swan, the Crab, and the Pike," we find that unsuitable trio agreeing to draw a load; but when the moment for action arrives, the swan flies into the air, the crab walks backwards, and the pike goes into the sea. Thereupon the fabulist remarks:—

"Which was right and which was wrong,  
I really can't pretend to say;



But this I know, they laboured long,  
And the load stands still to the present day." \*

The "Ass and the Nightingale" shows us the thick-skinned animal giving himself airs of connoisseurship, and asking the sweetest singer of the woods to favour him with a song. He listens. All nature is enchanted with the warbling of the bird; but the jackass shakes his head. "Not a bad voice," he observes, "but you should take a few lessons from the village cock." Here is the moral—

"What most the poet fears  
Is the critic with long ears."

A gentleman asks a friend to dine at his house, and, after the manner of the old Russian proprietors, entertains him with a concert. The guest does not think much of the music, and says so. The host takes the part of his musicians, and defends them in the following fashion :—

"As instrumentalists they're bad, but then  
Remember what these players are as men;  
They cannot fiddle, but they have this merit—  
They never touch a drop of wine or spirit."

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\* It was imagined by the Russians, at the beginning of the Crimean war, that the English, the French, and the Turks would pull together like the pike, the crab, and the swan. Hence several caricatures suggested by Kriloff's fable.



“But,” says the moralist, in a couplet which has since become a proverb—

“But I say drink, if drinking be your mood,  
And when you’re working, let your work be good!”

Henceforward I shall not attempt to reproduce even a fragment of these fables in verse, but will translate some literally into prose, and will endeavour to give a sufficient account of others, which, apart from all appropriateness and elegance of style, are interesting either from their applicability to persons and things in Russia, or from their general philosophic merit. To begin: every one knows that the great curse of Russia is the tyranny of the officials, who are, of course, theoretically speaking, amenable to the law, but against whose persecutions, practically, a poor man without influence can do nothing. The officials, then, are the wolves in the following fable of

#### THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP.

“The wolves led the sheep such a life that at last they could scarcely exist, and it was absolutely necessary that the Government should interfere to save them. To this end a council was held. It is true the greater number of those present were wolves, but it is not every wolf that has a bad name; and there have been instances, which must not be forgotten, of wolves, when they were satisfied, walking quite peaceably past a flock. Why,



then, should not wolves be admitted into the council? for though we must protect the sheep, still we must not be unjust to the wolves. Accordingly, a council was formed in the thickest part of the wood, where the members deliberated, debated, heard evidence, and at last made a law, which was, word for word, as follows:—  
‘As soon as a wolf is found troublesome in the neighbourhood of a flock, and begins to annoy the sheep, then any sheep, without distinction of rank, has a right to take the wolf by the neck and drag him instantly before the bar of the council. And nothing in this law shall be added or taken away.’”

“But though it is said that wolves are liable to punishment,” is the fabulist’s conclusion, “I find that, let the sheep be accusers or accused, the wolves still devour them.”

The frequent collusion between officials when one is the accused and the other the judge, is illustrated in a fable called “The Pike.” The pike has been plundering the pond in which he lives. The little fishes have abundance of proofs, and the culprit is taken before the tribunal in a manner suitable to his dignity, that is to say, in a large basin of water. There was no need to go far for the judges; they lived close by, and grazed on the banks of the pond. There were two asses, two or three goats, and, to aid them, a skilled jurisconsult, a most experienced fox, was joined to their number.



People said that the fox's table was never without fish ; indeed the pike gave him as much as he wanted, charitable soul ! However, it seemed impossible to shake the impartiality of the judges, for this time the guilt of the pike was beyond all doubt. It was resolved to inflict a terrible punishment, and, that other villains might be deterred from like offences, he was sentenced to be hanged. "Oh," said the fox, "hanging is too good for him. I call upon you, venerable tribunal, to visit his crime with a punishment even more severe. Let us drown him !" "The fox is right !" cried the judges in chorus, and thereupon the thief was taken and thrown into the river.

"The Fox and the Marmot" is a lesson for bribe-takers. "Whither are you running," says the latter to the former, "without daring to look on either side of you ?" "Calumny, calumny !" replies the fox ; "I have been driven out as a rogue, but *you* know whether I rendered justice or not in that poultry-yard. There was nothing to gain there ; it was a most ungrateful office. I had no sleep at night, by day I had scarcely time to eat a mouthful ; my health was even suffering by it ; and after all, through hatred and calumny, I am disgraced. Call *me* a thief indeed ! I only ask you whether I can be justly accused of the slightest act of dishonesty ?" "Certainly not, my dear friend," is the reply, "but I must say to my regret that I have sometimes seen down sticking to your muzzle."



“More than one functionary,” says Kriloff in the moral, “complains of his poverty, and declares that neither he nor his wife ever received presents. Nevertheless, in time he builds a villa, and buys an estate. How does he balance his disbursements and receipts? If you wanted to prove before a judge that he had taken bribes, you would find it difficult; yet everyone must acknowledge that the down is quite visible round the gentleman’s mouth.”

The dull, stupid rogue of an official who steals very quietly on a small scale is shown to us in the fable of “The Ass.” The animal in question robs the garden at his leisure, until his master, attaching some importance to the beast, and fearing to lose him, fastens a bell to his neck. The ass is delighted at receiving this “decoration,” and fancies himself a very important personage, but unfortunately for him, he can now no longer indulge his felonious tastes without the knowledge of his master, and he gets so many blows and so little food, that he is soon reduced to a skeleton. According to the Russian fabulist, a good many official rogues are caught in this manner. In obscure positions they can rob to their heart’s content. But let the bell of rank be attached to them, and the chances are they will be found out. I presume, however, that this applies only to such officials as are fairly typified by the Ass.

The comedy-writer quoted at the beginning of this chapter has told us that in fables “Lions and Eagles,”



in reality mean Tzars. According to this dictum, Kriloff's fable of the young lion who receives his education from the eagle ought to have some reference to the instruction of princes, and would mean that what is very useful knowledge for the son of one king may for another of a different country be without utility. At all events, Kriloff thought that the very best education for a Russian who was destined to play an important part in the government of his country was not that which he would receive even from the most enlightened and lofty-minded personage in a foreign land. The lion, determined to qualify his son for the throne he will one day have to fill, and "that the people may not blame the father for the faults of his son," thinks how he can best instruct the heir in kingly duties. Shall he send him to the fox? No; the fox is clever, but fond of deceit, which is not becoming in a king. Shall he give him to the mole? There has been a great talk of the mole's love of order, of his prudence in never taking a step without groping, of his economy and foresight in preparing grain for his own table; in a word, the mole is a great animal for trifles, but, unfortunately, he can only see just beyond his nose. "The mole's order," reflects his majesty, "is good enough for him, but a lion's kingdom is larger than a mole's burrow." Shall he take a panther as his son's preceptor? The panther is courageous, strong, and moreover is a great tactician; but then he understands nothing of the rights of citizens,



and what lessons in government could he give to a king who should be at once a judge, a minister, and a warrior? No; the panther knows only how to fight, and is not fit to give instruction to a royal child.

In short, none of the animals, not even the elephant, "who is honoured in the forests as Plato in Greece," appeared to the lion worthy to educate his son. At last another king, the king of the feathered tribe, who had a great friendship for the lion, and had heard of his majesty's difficulty, offered himself to educate the heir. The lion was delighted, and without delay sent his son to the eagle. The heir had some natural ability, and made such progress under the eagle's tuition, that soon all the birds of the wood were full of praise.

When, after many years, the young lion came back to his father, the latter assembled all his subjects, and said to his son, "My beloved, you are my only heir; my eyes are turned towards the grave, but you are just entering the world, and I willingly give up to you my entire kingdom; but tell me first what you have learnt, and how you intend to make your people happy."

"Papa," exclaims the son, "I know what no one here knows. From the eagle to the quail, I can tell where each bird most increases, on what it subsists, what eggs it has, and all the necessities of its life; and here is a certificate from my master to prove it. And now, as you propose to leave the government to me, I will at once begin and teach the beasts how to build nests."



The fable of the "Two Razors," though of general applicability, is understood to have had special reference to the Emperor Nicholas's selection of his ministers. A man at an inn is seen attempting to shave with a blunt razor, and hacking his face terribly in the operation. It is suggested to him that he should throw away the blunt razor and try instead a sharp one of the finest steel; but he declines the advice, saying that he is afraid of cutting himself. "Some persons," says the moral, "are afraid of able men, and patiently make use of fools."

Another of Kriloff's fables, which was addressed so evidently to the Emperor that it never was published, was written as if to illustrate Nicholas's treatment of Yermoloff. This general was the most popular commander Russia had had since Souvaroff, and he was so much loved by the army of the Caucasus, that, according to general report, the Emperor was jealous of his influence with the troops, and in spite of his important services recalled him, and placed him *en retraite*. This suggested to Kriloff a fable, in which the owner of a high-spirited horse, whose greatest delight is to serve his master and carry him bounding over the plains, is represented as shutting up his steed in the stable and leaving him to pine away in inactivity. The Emperor Nicholas is said to have read the fable, which was circulated in manuscript (as, indeed, were many of Kriloff's fables, before they were printed), and



to have sent for the author and remonstrated with him on having produced it. This is, of course, one of those stories of which the veracity cannot be guaranteed, and which, as the newspapers say, "we publish as it has reached us;" but it is quite certain that the fable in question is well known in Russia, and that the anecdote, as I have given it, finds general credence. It must be added that the Emperor Nicholas who has been accused of various acts of meanness which he never committed, seems to have borne no ill-will to Kriloff for having written the fable. Indeed, from first to last, his kindness to this illustrious and truly patriotic man was unvarying.

When the court itself received a hint occasionally, the courtier, a personage who has always been a favourite mark for satirists, was of course not to be spared. There is nothing, however, very severe, though there is a great deal that is true, in the fable—one of the best of the kind—of the squirrel who takes service at the court of the lion. The lion has promised the squirrel a cartload of nuts, for the sake of which the latter ceases to play with his companions, and, whether gay or sad, waits upon his majesty every day with a smiling face. Sometimes he thinks of the joyous life led by the other squirrels, and determines to join them for a time; but no sooner has he made this resolution than some important duty calls him to the palace. At last he grows old, his majesty gets tired of



him, and without much ceremony tells him to withdraw from the court. The rejected one, at the same time, receives the munificent donation that had been promised to him, a whole cartload of nuts of the finest quality. Indeed, it would have been difficult to find such nuts elsewhere, and the only pity is that the squirrel, having now lost all his teeth, cannot crack them !

Kriloff has written so many excellent fables of general interest that one scarcely knows which to speak of, and which to pass over. One of the most popular is that of "The Cat and the Cook," in the conception of which we see the vigorous shrewdness of the Russian mind reflected quite as strikingly as in the "Metapysics" of Khemnitzer, and in a more artistic, allegorical form. The cook was a great rhetorician, and was fond of preaching to the cat, whom, on one occasion, finding it necessary to visit the neighbouring tavern, he left in charge of the kitchen, enjoining him with much eloquence to preserve the eatables from the mice. On his return the cook, to his horror and amazement, found "Vaska" devouring a roast chicken, while by his side lay the evidence of previous guilt in the shape of an empty pie-crust. "Oh, you wretch, you glutton !" exclaims the cook ; "are you not ashamed that the very walls should see you, to say nothing of men ?" Vaska continues to eat the chicken. "Why, until now you were reputed an honest cat, you were even



held up as a pattern of virtue; and at present, oh dear, what a disgrace! the neighbours will say, 'That cat Vaska is a rogue; that cat Vaska is a thief; he is not fit to come into the kitchen, nor even into the yard; he is like a hungry wolf near a sheepfold, and is the pest and the poison of the place.' "

Vaska hears and eats.

"The orator," says Kriloff, "gave full flow to his words, and there would apparently have been no end to his moralizing, when suddenly he perceived that while he had been talking the cat had finished the chicken." One can fancy the Emperor Nicholas enjoying this fable, and saying to himself that the moral, as follows, might have been profitably studied by Louis Philippe:—"I give this piece of advice to other cooks, and would have them inscribe it on the kitchen wall: 'not to waste words when force should be employed.' "

Another favourite fable of Kriloff's is the one known as "The Quartet." The ape, the ass, the goat, and the bear, form a quartet society. They have all they can possibly want; a violoncello, an alto, a couple of violins, and plenty of music. They go out into the meadow and sit under the lime-trees to charm the world with their art. They strike, they tear at the strings; but no harmony comes of it. "Stop, stop!" cries the ape; "how can we play quartets thus? we are not properly seated. You, my dear bear with the



bass, must sit facing the alto, and I will take up my position opposite the second violin; all will then be admirable, and the woods and hills will dance to our music." They arrange themselves accordingly, and recommence the quartet; but still it goes wrong. "Wait a moment, I have discovered the secret," says the ass; "we shall go well together if we sit in a row." The advice of the ass is followed, and the musicians sit in a straight line; but still they have no success. Then there are fresh disputes, and they are quarrelling as to how they ought to sit, when a nightingale, alarmed at the noise, flies towards them, and is at once requested to decide their doubts. "We have instruments, music-books, and everything," they say, "and only wish to know how we should sit."

"To be a musician," replies the nightingale, "one must have other ears than yours; without knowledge or taste, you may sit as you please, you will make no music."

Every fable-writer has moralized on man's weakness for gold, and some of Kriloff's fables on the monetary question are exceedingly happy. In one of these, Fortune appears to a beggar, and offers him as much gold as his bag will hold, warning him at the same time that, if any of it touches the ground, it will instantly turn to dust. The poor man holds the bag, into which Fortune showers gold until at last it is full to the mouth. "One piece more," says the beggar,



and Fortune cautioning him at the same time that the bag may give way, puts in another coin. "Still another piece," cries the beggar; and Fortune telling him to beware, thrusts piece after piece into the bag, until at last it bursts, and all is dust.

In "Fortune on a Visit," the goddess gives one of her favourites a magic purse, which possesses this admirable property, that as long as he continues to put his hand into it he draws out money, but let him once pause from his agreeable labour, and the purse is dry. The man has soon a heap of gold by his side; but neither hunger nor fatigue can make him desist from his lucrative occupation, and at last he dies of exhaustion by the side of his treasure.

"The Sack" is a fable for *parvenus*. An old bag has been lying in an ante-chamber used from time to time for any dirty work the servants might have on hand, such, for instance, as wiping the mud from their boots. Suddenly the master of the house has need of it, and it is filled with ducats. The sack is now no longer kicked about, but stands erect in a room, to which not every one is admitted; and it is becomingly boastful of its height, its bulk, and the marked attention with which it is treated. How it despises other sacks, empty or less richly filled, and remarks that this one is no good, that that will decidedly come to a bad end, and so on! But, at last, the proud sack is deprived of its ducats, and it is then once more a



worthless rag, and is thrown into the dust-hole, to be thought of no more.

“The Shadow and the Man,” of all Kriloff’s fables, is the most fanciful and poetical, and it seems scarcely to have needed a moral. An idler tries to catch his own shadow. As he runs, so it runs; like a treasure seeking to avoid his grasp. The man turns back, looks round, and sees that his shadow is following him.

“Beauties!” exclaims the fabulist;—“but no,” he adds, “this does not apply to you. But as regards fortune, does not one man waste time and trouble in striving to overtake it, while another seems to be avoiding it, when Fortune herself runs after him?”

“Miron” is the fable of a man who wishes to have a reputation for charity, and is at the same time unwilling to give. It is not an uncommon thing for rich Russian merchants, on stated days, and especially on festivals, to distribute money to the poor, who, on these occasions, fill the court-yard of the house. Miron is a millionaire, of whom it is said that he never gives a copeik to the poor; for the sake, therefore, of his good name, he announces that he will feed beggars every Saturday. Crowds flock to his gates, which are left wide open to receive the alms-seekers; and every one says, that if this goes on Miron will be eaten out of house and home. But no; for every Saturday Miron lets loose in his yard a savage mastiff, and the beggars



have not only to eat and satisfy themselves, but also to get away from the place without being bitten. In the meanwhile, Miron is accounted a saint. "It is impossible to admire his generosity too much," says the world; "but it is a pity he keeps such savage dogs: it is somewhat difficult to approach him, but he is ready to divide all he has with the poor."

"I have often observed," adds Kriloff, "that the palaces of the great are not easy of access; but it is always the fault of the dogs: the Miron, themselves, are of course in no way to blame."

Sometimes the fable-writer speaks despondingly of the race of place-hunters and parasites who are the plague of the Russian people, as though it were exterminable, and belonged naturally to the institutions of the country. A prince talking to a philosopher asks him to explain, if possible, how it happens that he cannot establish a court of justice, or a learned society, without the meanest persons, before he has time to look round, finding their way into it. "Is there no remedy for this?" he inquires. "I am afraid not," replies the sage; "between ourselves, it is like our wooden houses. I finished mine only seven days since; the owner has not yet taken possession, but the cockroaches were there long ago."

This last fable, like that of Miron, has, perhaps, more a national than a general character. "Trishka's Caftan," and "Dimian's Fish Soup," are also national



in colour ; but they are of universal application. The former is a Russian version of the story of the Irishman's blanket. Trishka cuts off the skirt of his caftan to mend the sleeves. "Dimian's Fish Soup" is the history of an over-hospitable gentleman, who, with many entreaties, and with loud praises of his cook, urges the said Dimian to swallow dish after dish of his really excellent fish-soup, until at last the unfortunate guest takes up his girdle and his cap, and runs in despair from the house. This fable is said to have been read for the first time under very appropriate circumstances. Kriloff had been invited to a meeting of authors, at the house of the poet Derjavin, where it was understood that several literary productions would be read for the first time. Kriloff had promised to bring a new fable, and, according to his wont, arrived late. It so happened that one of the party, who, no doubt, came very early, was reading an interminable paper, which long since had made every one present yawn. When Kriloff came in, every one was anxious to hear the new fable ; but he insisted on the gentleman who had the ear of the assembly continuing to read his essay. Indeed, it would have been difficult to stop him ; he forced it upon the company. At last the seemingly endless composition came to an end, but not until every one was tired to death. Then Kriloff produced his long-expected fable, which is a model of terseness, and of which the moral is as follows :—" You



are happy, oh writer, having a gift from heaven; but if you do not know how to be silent in time, and will not spare the ears of your neighbour, then understand that your prose and verse will be more nauseating even than Dimian's fish-soup."

Some of Kriloff's fables are simply interesting little narratives, fables in the strict, but not in the generally-received, sense of the word. Such, for instance, is that of "The Trigamist," which, if it can be said to have any moral at all, teaches no more than this—that folly persisted in generally meets with its own reward. A man is convicted of having married three wives. What is to be done to him? There is a punishment for bigamy, but for such an offence as trigamy the law makes no provision. The judge simply decides that the man shall live in the same house with his three wives. "That was no punishment at all," says an imaginary reader. "Was it not?" answers the fabulist: "in less than a week the man hanged himself." "The Libel," too, is little more than an amusing story, and it is so humorous in itself that one almost forgets to seek for its application. A Brahmin on a fast day ("it is only among the Brahmins," says Kriloff, "that there are such hypocrites") feels inclined to eat something nourishing. In great fear of his superior, he waits till night, lights a candle, and roasts an egg over it. He is gloating by anticipation over the feast, and flattering himself that his superior will never hear of



his peccadillo, when suddenly the latter enters the cell. "What is the meaning of this?" he cries. "Deny it not; I find the egg in your hand." "Pardon me, holy father," exclaims the Brahmin, through his tears, "I do not know how I fell into such a sin, but I was tempted by the devil." Upon this the devil himself appears from behind the stove. "Are you not ashamed," he says to the Brahmin, "to calumniate me so? I have just taken a lesson from you, for never until this moment did I know how to roast an egg over a candle."

M. Xavier le Maistre has translated, with great felicity, the fable of the "Author and the Thief," which could not fail to please the admiring brother of the author of the work "*Du Pape*" and of "*Les Soirées de St. Pétersbourg*." The thief is any thief; in the author most persons will recognise Voltaire. The two arrive at the same time in the infernal regions. The robber is plunged into a vessel of boiling water, while the author is accommodated with a cauldron, in which the temperature is quite moderate. The author smiles at this, and indulges in a good many jokes at the expense of his ill-fated companion. Gradually, however, the water in the author's saucepan gets warmer and warmer, and in course of time begins to boil; while in the mean time the fire beneath the cauldron of the robber has been allowed to go out. At this the man of letters raves, and curses, inquiring why he, who never com-



mitted any offence, is to be stewed alive, when the common felon by his side is enjoying a tepid bath? Alecto, thus appealed to, appears, and the author, "recognising his muse," is dumb. "The crimes of that assassin," says the Fury, "terminated with his life; but the number of yours increases with the multiplication of your criminal books, which, from age to age, pervert mankind. Your bones are dust: but the sun never shines without giving light to a thousand fresh crimes, the tardy but certain fruits of your atrocious works. The names of your gods you have both taken in vain and have insulted—religious in the theatre, blasphemer in the temple. You have filled the universe with the germs of crime, which will, perhaps, be developed in a thousand years, and their fatal effects will only disappear to be reproduced again. Suffer, then, until throughout the world your books shall have ceased to corrupt, until men shall have ceased to read them."

The above is, perhaps, the most earnest of all Kriloff's fables. It is one that a professed Voltairian would object to; but, it is, of course, applicable to any vicious and powerful author whose works have lived after his death to the detriment of mankind, and Kriloff himself names no one. M. Xavier le Maistre has also translated, or imitated (but not in the style of Count Orloff's contributors), Kriloff's "Friendship of the Dogs." Two dogs in a court-yard make friends.



Why should they hate one another? they will fight no more; how charming is peace, &c. Suddenly a bone is thrown from a window, and the allies tear themselves to pieces for it.

Two fables, which appear to me quite *Æsopian* in their simplicity and significance, are those of the "Farmer and his Labourer," and of the "Gnat and the Shepherd."

In the former the farmer is attacked by a bear, and is about to lose his life, when the labourer appears, and, with a pitchfork, pierces the animal to the heart. "Good heavens!" cries the grateful farmer, when he has recovered from his fright, "you have spoilt the skin."

In the latter, a sleeping shepherd is about to be stung by a serpent, when a friendly gnat bites him on the nose, and awakens him. The shepherd destroys the serpent, but he also kills the gnat—a warning to the benevolent not to be too officious in opening the eyes of any one.

The "Rat and the Mouse" is a fable for poltroons. "Have you heard the good news?" says a mouse to a rat; "the cat is dead! It was killed by the lion." "Nonsense!" says the rat, "if it came to nails the lion would not be alive: there is no beast so strong as the cat." This, however, is *Kriloff's* moral: a coward is afraid of some particular person, and imagines all the world fears him.



Two agreeable little fables, the last I shall mention, are those of the "Fly and the Bee," and of the "Hare at the Hunt." The fly is the parasite of society, and is boasting to the bee of the banquets he frequents, of the viands and wines of which he partakes, and of the beauties on whose cheeks and bosoms he reposes. "But you are regarded as a nuisance," objects the bee, "and I am told that you are frequently driven from the room." "What of that?" replies the fly, "they drive me out at one window and I come in at another."

In the hare we have an image of the feeble boaster. The animals have been hunting the bear, and have killed him. "It was I who caused his death," says the hare. "You?" exclaim the animals in chorus. "Yes," returns the feeble one, "for who else frightened him along the wood, and who drove him along the plain?" The animals laugh, but reward the hare for having amused them; they give him the tip of the bear's ear. "You may laugh at those who brag," says the fabulist, "but they often gain by their bragging."

Kriloff, during the last twenty years of his life, was custodian of the imperial library at St. Petersburg. He enjoyed the friendship of Poushkin, Derjavin, Joukovski, Karamsin, Gneditch, the translator of the "Iliad," and all the celebrated writers of Russia, to speak of whom out of Russia would be for the most part



to mention unknown names. It is related as a proof of Kriloff's immense though rarely exercised energy (for in ordinary matters his indolence was extreme) that at the age of fifty he commenced studying Greek, and before the expiration of two years had managed to read all the Greek poets in the original from Homer to Anacreon. He first revealed this new accomplishment at the house of Gneditch, who, hesitating as to the exact translation of a passage from Homer, was enlightened on the subject by Kriloff. Gneditch imagined that his friend had studied Greek for the purpose of aiding him in his projected translation of the "Odyssey," but was soon undeceived.

Curious stories are told of Kriloff's preternatural idleness and carelessness in private life. He kept, it is said, a certain number of books under his bed, and when he had read these through, rather than trouble himself to get a fresh supply, read them again. His biographers smile at this; but if Kriloff's bedroom library was composed of a very few choice works, he might have smiled at them for smiling. Once, when Kriloff was going to dine with the Empress, Prince Olenyin, the most intimate friend he had, called upon him to see if his court dress was in proper order. "Do you think," said Kriloff, "I should go to visit her Majesty in my dressing-gown? I have just ordered this new uniform; look at it." The Prince inspected it, and it was for-



tunate he did so ; for it had never struck Kriloff that he ought to take off the silver paper in which the gold buttons were enveloped.

One of Kriloff's most graceful fables, "The Corn-Flower," has reference to the kindness shown to him by the Empress during a dangerous illness, from which he was not expected to recover. Some flowers which her Majesty sent to him at this time were so much prized by the poet, that he requested they might be buried with him ; and they were, in fact, placed in his coffin, together with the laurel wreath presented to him by the authors of Russia at the celebration of his jubilee.

This event, the most important in his life, took place when Kriloff was seventy years of age—fifty years after the production of his first tragedy. In the morning the Grand Dukes Nicholas and Michael paid him a visit of congratulation. The Emperor Nicholas sent him the order of St. Stanislas, and the Minister of Public Instruction, with Prince Olenyin, Joukovski, and other distinguished writers, delivered orations and poems in his honour at the banquet, at which three hundred of the most distinguished persons in Russia were present. "We thank you," said Joukovski on this occasion, "first in our own name, for the happy moments we have passed communing with your genius ; we thank you for the 'youth of the past, the present, and of future generations, who with your works began



and will continue to love their national language, to understand the beautiful, and to initiate themselves in the true wisdom of life; we thank you for the Russian people, to whom in your poetry you have so clearly revealed their true spirit, and with so much that is delightful have given such profound admonitions; and, lastly, we thank you for your illustrious name, which is one of the treasures of the nation, and which for ever belongs to the annals of its glory." At the conclusion of this festival, all present subscribed for the casting of a commemorative medal; but when the Emperor heard of this project he gave orders, that the medals should be produced at the Government expense; and the subscriptions had now reached such a sum that it was resolved to found two "Kriloff Scholarships" with the money, the interest of which has since been devoted to the education of two orphan children at one of the St. Petersburg gymnasiums. Kriloff had the satisfaction of naming his first two scholars himself.

In 1841 Kriloff resigned his post at the Imperial library, and retired with a pension from the Emperor equivalent to six hundred pounds a year. This he enjoyed for a very short time, and died in 1844, six years after the festival. The Government gave three thousand roubles for the expenses of the funeral, and it was attended by the members of the University of St. Petersburg and of the Academy of Arts, by the most



distinguished persons in the empire, by the rich, by the poor—in short, by men of all classes.

Nor did the gratitude of Kriloff's compatriots cease with his death. Soon afterwards a subscription was opened for a monument in his honour, for which, that all might take part in it, the smallest contributions were received. The Emperor gave the site in the Summer Garden, and the statue of the old man in the dressing-gown, already described, was the produce of the fund.

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## CHAPTER VII.

## THE TROITZA MONASTERY.

KIEFF, the ancient capital of the Grand Princes; Moscow, the capital of the Tzars; and St. Petersburg, the capital of the Emperors, have each their Laura. Of these three great religious and monasterial establishments, the most ancient is that of the Tombs at Kieff, the most interesting in historical association that of the Troitza, or Trinity, near Moscow. The Laura of St. Alexander Nevski at St. Petersburg is, of course, like St. Petersburg itself, of modern origin; but it commemorates the achievements of one of the earliest saints and warriors of Russia, who, in the first battle fought by the Russians against Europeans, defeated the Swedes and the Germans of Livonia on the ice of the Neva, whence his epithet of "Nevski." "Saint and Warrior" are titles



that are found linked together in the Russian calendar as frequently as those of "Virgin and Martyr" in the calendars of Catholic countries. Never was a church so severely persecuted, and for such a length of time, as that of Russia, and but for its constant and binding influence on its children it appears certain that, under the domination of the Mahometan Tartars, Christian Russia would have become Tartarized, as, according to many writers who have never visited Russia, and who are quite ignorant of the history and ethnology of the country, it actually was. The Russians are sometimes reproached with not having gone to the Crusades, but the fact is, the Crusades came to them ; and from the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century the history of Russia, though the nation was at that time broken up into separate and, for the most part, hostile principalities, is, in a great measure, the history of its devotion to the Cross, of the occasional victories of its soldiers over the infidels, and of the frequent martyrdom of its chiefs.

Thus Prince Alexander of Tver, when the inhabitants of that city discovered that the Khan Usbec wished to force Islamism upon them and upon all Russia, placed himself at their head and attacked and destroyed the Tartar garrison (1327) ; and thus Demetrius of the Don defeated the Tartars at Koulikoff, when St. Sergius, the founder of the Troitza monastery, blessed the Russian banners, and two of his warrior monks fell fighting



on the field of battle (1380). Among the numerous martyrs of the same period are Prince Michael of Tchernigoff and his minister Theodore, who refused to fall down before the Mongol idols\* and were put to death (1246); Prince Roman of Riazan, who, accused of having blasphemed against the religion of the Prophet, and refusing to become a Mahometan, was sentenced by the Khan to be chopped in pieces, and during the execution of the sentence continued to preach Christianity until his tongue was cut out (1270); and Prince Michael of Tver, who was slain at the Horde, and died reading the psalter (1320).

The Tartars were far more formidable than is generally imagined. Mićkiewicz, who was about as much a partizan of Russia as Victor Hugo is of Napoleon III., renders full justice to his great enemy in his lectures on the Slavonians, and shows that the Russians saved Europe from a Mongol invasion. At first, after heroic struggles, they succumbed, though without losing their religion or their national unity (the latter, however, being only preserved through the former); but at last, by policy and force of arms, they cleared their territory of invaders, freed themselves from tribute, and captured all the Tartar strongholds. The actions of the Poles

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\* During the invasion of Batu Khan, before the Tartar hordes had adopted Islamism.



against the Tartars were never very important or very decisive ; and if the barbarians had completely subdued Russia, still more if the Russians had basely accepted their offer of an alliance, the Mongolian torrent would have swept over Poland and inundated Germany. Though ignorant of all the arts, the Mongols had great powers of organization, and were as untiring and intrepid in their attacks as they were cruel after their victories. Gengis-Khan was unable to read and write, but he could send his messages thousands of miles. The only architecture known to his subjects was that which consisted in forming pyramids out of mortar and living men ; but they established a line of posts which extended from the frontiers of Poland to China. The Poles, says their greatest writer, could never have overcome these warlike and merciless tribes, who studied nothing but the use of arms ; who passed their lives on horseback, who even lived on their horses in this sense, that their chief food was horse-flesh and the milk of mares ; who, at the same time, could go for days without food, and who, when they took a city by storm, put all the inhabitants to the sword except the working men.\* To drive them back to their steppes beyond the Oural mountains military genius alone

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\* It was one of the maxims of the Tartars that "the conquered could never become the friends of the conquerors."



would not have sufficed; it required also the political genius of the Russians, who knew how to encourage the contests between the Khans of Kazan and the Khans of the Crimea, and at the proper moment fell upon Kazan and Astrakhan, and captured them both by assault.

The Tartars, when they obtained possession of a Russian town, not only massacred the inhabitants, but burned the libraries; and thus mountains of books were consumed. The monasteries, which were already the fortresses of the country,\* became at the same time the sole depositories of learning, and from behind their walls all the religious and patriotic combinations against the Mahometan oppressors proceeded. The catacombs in the Laura of Kieff are full of the bones of martyrs slain by the Tartars; but the historical associations of the Laura of the Troitza are all of a triumphant kind. We have seen that from the Troitza St. Sergius and his warrior-monks, who so greatly influenced the fortunes of the day, went forth to join the army of Demetrius before the battle of Koulikoff, in which the Tartar hosts were utterly routed; and

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\* The fortress on the White Sea, bombarded during the Crimean war, was nothing but a fortified monastery. According to the Russians it was the sacred character of the edifice, together with a certain miraculous picture of the Virgin, the willing recipient of most of the projectiles, that saved it from destruction.



from the Troitza the Archimandrite of the monastery blessed the soldiers of Prince Pojarski and Minin of Nijni-Novgorod when they were preparing to liberate Moscow from the Poles, in 1612. "A deep moat, high walls, and the very situation of the monastery," says Karamsin, "made it for some time the best fortress of our land. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the monks defended themselves with their stone walls, not so much from the world's scandal as from fierce enemies in search of spoil. All the old monasteries around Moscow are built on high places, doubtless not for the sake of the view, about which pious hermits did not trouble themselves. I have seen traces of the works from which the Poles battered down the walls of the Troitza, but among their ruins the enemy sometimes found a grave, fighting against two strong feelings—love of country and religion."

St. Sergius, the founder of the Troitza monastery, lived in the fourteenth century. A devout Russian, who passed his life in visiting the holy places of his country, and who recommended me earnestly not to leave Moscow without going to see the Troitza, was kind enough to write for my use and benefit a short biography of the patron saint, of which tradition seems to have furnished the materials. I learn from my friend's manuscript that the miraculous existence of St. Sergius—or Bartholomew, as he was baptized—commenced before his birth, and that during his



prænatal period he uttered three cries which are now understood to have been symbolical of the Trinity. During his infancy and childhood the future saint remained deaf to the voice of tuition; but his parents (who belonged to the ancient nobility of Russia) having complained of their son's want of aptitude to a holy man whom young Bartholomew had found in a forest and had invited to the paternal house, the stranger sang a *Te Deum* and opened the Bible, when it was found that the boy could read fluently. The miraculous schoolmaster then became invisible. It was not until after his parents' death that Bartholomew assumed his monachal name of Sergius, retired from the world, and founded the monastery of the Troitza, or Trinity. There this "man of heaven and angel of earth" lived a life of unexampled holiness, until "even the wild beasts of the forest respected him, and lost, in his presence, their habitual ferocity."

The most important siege sustained by the Troitza monastery was in 1612, when it was attacked by the Poles in great numbers and with a powerful artillery. The monks, aided by a small military force, made a desperate defence. Many perished on the walls, but at last the Polish army was repulsed, its commander, the gallant Lisoski, being slain.

Peter the Great, during the first insurrection of the Strelitzi, took refuge at the Troitza monastery.

The Troitza, in spite of its immense wealth, acquired



in offerings from all parts of Russia, was not plundered by the French in 1812, at which the Marquis de Custine and Baron Haxthausen cannot but express their surprise, the latter estimating that of valuable pearls alone there are more in the Laura of the Troitza than in all the rest of Europe. The legend on the subject says that it was left undefended, that Murat was ordered to take it, but that, looking in the direction of the monastery from the Kremlin, he saw a large army of soldiers in black posted along the road, and reported to the Emperor that, with the force place at his disposition, it was impossible to make the attack. Need I say that this was a miraculous appearance? The black soldiers were the monks of past ages; and the author of my manuscript notes assures me that St. Sergius himself reviewed them, after receiving the blessing of Plato, the Metropolitan of Moscow, who, however, did not recognize the saint until a later period, and from memory. So, during the siege of the monastery by the Poles, I learn, from the same authority, that an old man, answering to the description of St. Sergius, used to appear on horseback in the clouds and encourage the monks to do battle against the besiegers.

The Troitza monastery is about forty miles from Moscow, and all along the route pilgrims may be seen sitting, and, in the summer, lying down beneath the shade of the trees, at every village on the way. The



*moujik* in his perpetual sheepskin, warranted to keep out heat as well as cold, the merchant in his caftan, and at times persons of all conditions, may be seen walking slowly in the direction of the monastery, esteeming the journey to be of more efficacy from the fact of its being accomplished on foot. The peasant wears shoes or slippers—canoe-shaped contrivances—made out of the bark of the willow tree. If by chance he has leather shoes he carries them on his back, so as not to wear them out. Here and there a devout traveller is accompanied by his wife, who wears a long veil to protect her from the sun and dust, and an umbrella to screen her from the sun and rain. Behind comes a *kibitka*, where the lady who owns it has taken care to place a mattress, cushions, and, above all, an urn in which to prepare boiling water for tea before retiring to rest at night. Slowly, by short marches, these pilgrims are wending their way towards the church of St. Sergius, in the Laura of the Troitza. The road is rough as well as long, and those who visit the monastery in the capacity of tourists, naturally do not walk there, but go either in the Diligence, which leaves Moscow three times a week, or in a private carriage. Similar means of locomotion are resorted to at present by a large number of pilgrims themselves, and only those who are very devout or very poor make the entire journey on foot. Those who hire a carriage for themselves usually start from Moscow at night, or



about three in the morning, taking with them a proper supply of pillows, or even a bed and bed-clothes—for the Russians understand nocturnal travelling, and do their eight or nine miles an hour in spacious vehicles, which are tolerable sitting-rooms by day and not uncomfortable bed-rooms by night. After breakfasting and visiting the monastery, there is plenty of time to dine and return to Moscow before the evening is very far advanced.

A few miles before arriving at the monastery the coachman, if he knows the traditions of the road, will stop at a place where a hermit, who died twenty or thirty years since, spent the greater part of his life in boring a passage through the earth to a little chapel in the immediate vicinity, by the side of which he now lies buried.

At Khatkoff the pilgrim usually pauses to prostrate himself before the relics of St. Cyrillus and Mary, the father and mother of St. Sergius. The convent in which the relics are kept is surrounded by a wood, and is in the form of a long street closed at each end by a huge gate in which is a tower containing a little chapel.

On leaving Khatkoff we pass through another wood and emerge upon a plain from which the cupolas of the monastery are visible. Soon afterwards we come to a few huts, an inn, and a row of shops or stalls, at which images, relics and souvenirs of the monastery,



in every shape, are sold. Money-changers—in rags like the pedestrian pilgrims themselves—are present to supply the faithful with the most convenient coin for almsgiving, and beggars ready to receive the alms are certainly not wanting. Indeed there are beggars all along the road, and with reason; for how can those who are offering up their prayers hope that they will be heard, if they refuse a mite to a fellow-creature who declares himself to be starving, and who, in spite of his usually lucrative calling, may perchance be actually in that condition?

These beggars are very liberal in their offers of intercession, and some volunteered for a very few copeiks to pray for all our party during the space of a year. The seniors of the profession, however, were less moderate in their demands; and one well-dressed, warmly clad, prosperous-looking alms-seeker, on whom five copeiks (equivalent to twopence) had been bestowed—less in pity than in acknowledgment of his affability and of his very original demeanour in the capacity of mendicant—objected to the sum, that it would not enable him to buy a pair of gloves. He was wearing a pair of thick fur gauntlets at the time, but perhaps he wished to go to a ball.

An air of sanctity pervades not only the Laura, but the village or burgh that has grown up around it, and which stands on the monasterial estate. The caravan-serais, called hotels, are eminently penitential, dirty,



comfortless resting-places, without beds, bedding, or any sleeping accommodation beyond sofas, of which there is one in every room, and without any washing accommodation beyond basins and water, but with plenty of views of the Troitza, its cathedrals and churches; portraits of St. Sergius, Nikon, his disciple, and Plato, the late Archimandrite of the monastery and Metropolitan of Moscow;\* and with representations of the Last Judgment, and of the grotesque horrors that "Gospodin Tchort" ("Mr. Devil") proposes to inflict upon the wicked—among which a prolonged residence in one of the Troitza hostelries is *not* included. I had been amused at Moscow by the precautions of a young Russian belonging to our party, who had packed up a number of towels in his portmanteau; but I afterwards found, and was rejoiced to find, that the family whose invitation I had accepted, had actually filled their carriages with bedding, in default of which we should have suffered a good deal from our two nights' lodging at the Troitza, to say nothing of jolting on the road, from which the ladies were saved by the intervention of pillows. The Russians talk a great deal of their sledging, which is

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\* One of the most learned men the Russian Church ever possessed. When Joseph II., on his return from Russia, was asked what he found most worthy of admiration in that country, he is said to have replied, "The Metropolitan Plato."



indeed delightful when the roads are good and the frozen snow lies evenly along them, but only then. Plenty of snow will make bad roads comparatively good, but a drift after a heavy fall will spoil the best road in the world for pleasant travelling; and we found that of the Troitza covered with wave-like ridges, up and down which the heavy carriages heaved and plunged, until their ship-like movement was testified to by the (*quasi*) sea-sickness of one or two of the more delicate of the travellers.

Intending visitors to Russia who may see this book, will do well to remember that it is only in the foreign hotels of St. Petersburg and Moscow that they must expect to obtain bedrooms furnished with the essential articles of bedroom furniture. At a true Russian hotel they will find nothing in the rooms but a few chairs, a table, a sofa, and a portrait of his Imperial Majesty. There is always a restaurant attached to the place, but the hotel-keeper no more counts on your requiring him to supply you with sheets and blankets for your sofa, than on your asking him to lend you a night-shirt. Russians to whom I have spoken about the wretched inn accommodation of the country, while agreeing with me generally, have added, that as to sheets they would not sleep in any but their own, and have expressed surprise and dissatisfaction when I have assured them that in travelling westward they would do well to leave their sheets and



pillows at home, and have full confidence in the hotel-keepers of the cities they visited. It has often amused me since to think of the commotion that would be caused at the principal hotel of Königsberg, by the attempt of a Russian family, just arrived from the frontier, to substitute their own candid linen for the suspicious bedclothes furnished by the proprietor.

On each side of the entrance to the monastery there are booths, at which pictures, images, and all kinds of "souvenirs" of the Troitza are sold. Here, too, the pilgrim who is disposed to cleanliness may purchase soap. Brushes also will be pressed upon him—tooth and nail—with "Atkinson, London," engraved upon the handles, but which have probably no more come from Bond Street than the Troitza perfumers' "Brown Windsor"—which is enclosed in silver paper and labelled as above, but is, in itself, a curious-looking, ill-smelling, greasy, greyish compound. Thus I had seen bone-buttons in Russia, with "Best double-gilt" engraved upon them, and Madeira, with "Dry Madère des Indes, H. B. and Co., London," on the bottles. So also packets of tobacco, with "Tabac à l'usage de la noblesse Turque," printed on the paper.

After my first short visit to the monastery, a monk, to whom I had a letter of introduction, advised me to shift my quarters at once to an hotel attached and belonging to the establishment. This was, in all



respects, an improvement upon the private inn, except as regarded bedroom furniture. But I now began to understand that a broad sofa was, after all, quite as good as a bed, and that at Russian hotels it was decidedly best not to look to the proprietors for linen. The cooking was admirable; it was worthy of any restaurant or any monastery in Europe, and seemed to show that if there were times for fasting there were also times for feasting at the Laura of the Troitza. The rooms too, if not thoroughly well-furnished, were convenient, and above all, cheap—for there was nothing to pay for them. The monastery lodges travellers gratuitously, charging them, however, for their food, and allowing them to contribute whatever they think fit to the monasterial fund. When I was about to leave, a monk, looking very much like Don Basil in the “Barber of Seville,” entered with downcast eyes, and with a money-box in his hand. Into this you drop as many or as few roubles as you like. If you choose to dine *in formâ pauperis*, there is a *table d’hôte* every day in the monastery, which is open to all pilgrims.

The solitary habitation of Sergius the poor hermit was the nucleus of the now spacious and magnificent Laura of the Trinity. Other holy men, warriors as well as theologians, congregated around the saint at a time when all who were good and brave in the country felt deeply the degradation to which the persecution of the Tartars had reduced Christian Russia; and we



have seen that from the hermits and soldier-monks of the Troitza the idea of the great Battle of Koulikoff proceeded. During the darkest period of Russian history, the Church produced a great number of men remarkable for devotion, patriotism, and high ability. Indeed, from Nestor, the author of the "Chronicles" (the oldest work written in a modern European language), to Philaret, the present Metropolitan of Moscow, the list of Russian ecclesiastics who have deserved well of their country is a long one. The Patriarch Nikon, 1605-81, like Nestor, Plato, and, one may add, Philaret, is chiefly known by his writings,—that is say, by his "Annals," and his new version of the Holy Scriptures, into the ancient Slavonian text of which many errors had crept; but Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow, besides being a man of great learning and eloquence, possessed high political genius, and prepared the combination of Russian princes under Demetrius against the Tartars. St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, after protesting in vain against the cruelties of Ivan the Terrible, condemned his atrocious life with solemn indignation in the cathedral of the Kremlin, and was in consequence tortured to death. Hermogenes, Metropolitan of Moscow, refusing to crown Ladislas, the Polish prince, when the Poles held the Russian capital (1612), was thrown into prison, and died of hunger. Philaret, his successor (father of Michael, the first of the Romanoffs) having similarly



refused, was carried away by the Poles in their retreat, and kept nine years a captive in Poland. For a proof of the mental and moral superiority of the high clergy to the other classes in Russia, during Peter the Great's reign, see in Voltaire's *Life* the dignified and charitable answers given by the synod to Peter's questions as to the guilt of his son and the punishment proper to be inflicted upon him.

But to return to the Troitza.

All the inscriptions in and about the monastery are in old Slavonian,\* which is still the ecclesiastical language of Russia, as it is also the language of the Russian navy in so far as regards the naming of ships: doubtless sea-captains command as preachers preach, in the modern Russian tongue. The name over the little shed where the holy images are sold is in Slavonian; the text above the poor-box in the chapel of the hospital is in Slavonian—everything, in short, except the bill at the monasterial hotel, which was in good Russian.

The golden-headed towers, the gold crosses, the painted and bestarred cupolas, which present such a brilliant picture to the traveller approaching the Troitza, are all grouped around the Cathedral of the Assumption,

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\* Church Slavonian differs (though but slightly) from modern Russian in alphabet, in vocabulary, and even in construction. Thus the former has a dual number, which the latter does not possess.



which is built after the model of the one of the same name in the Kremlin. Here is seen the tomb of Boris Godounoff, whom Karamsin (who, however, lived before the "rehabilitation" of the Protector) regards as the Cromwell of Russia; also an altar given by Peter the Great in memory of his having found protection at the Troitza during the insurrection of the musketeers.

Between the Cathedral of the Assumption and the Treasury stands an obelisk, on which a record is preserved of the principal services rendered by the Troitza monastery to the State. In the Treasury, too, are the rich sacerdotal robes and gold and silver plate which the monks carried out to the mutinous, unpaid Cossacks of Prince Troubetzkoi in 1612, a sight which at once recalled the discontented troops to their duty. Among the other treasures of the place are the shoes of St. Sergius, a good deal down at heel; a blue caftan, once the property of Ivan the Terrible; the bridle of Prince Pojarski's horse; a letter from the Emperor Paul, announcing the birth of Nicholas, to the Metropolitan Plato; and, above all, a "natural Panagia," supposed to be a miraculous product, and which is, at all events, one of the most wonderful curiosities in the monastery, being the distinct image of a monk kneeling before a crucifix, formed by the veins in a semi-transparent agate which is said to have been found in the Oural mountains. The agate, oval in shape and about four inches high, is set like a brooch with an *entourage* of



diamonds and pearls forming a halo, and is surrounded by a crown ornamented with six pearls as large as pistol bullets. The picture is apparently in the heart of the stone. It looks dull and opaque on one side; but on the other it is bright, and the eyes of the monk can be seen.

Let me now say in as few words as possible what else I saw of interest at the Troitza monastery. First, the monks in black caftans, in high black caps or hats like brimless gibuses, with long black veils hanging down at the back, and for the most part with equally long black hair. They were at dinner in the everyday refectory (there is a handsomer one for Sundays), all eating, drinking, talking, and apparently enjoying themselves, except one who read aloud with great volubility and evident consciousness that no one was listening to him. There were monks in the cathedral, in two long rows chanting the service,—a magnificent choir. Then there were monks in their cells, and monks in one of the chapels singing “Eternal Memory” for a departed soul, and monks in the church of the Holy Trinity, before the shrine of St. Sergius, performing a service of thanksgiving for a pilgrim restored to health. This was not the season for pilgrims, but the churches and chapels nevertheless seemed full of them, and of whining but warmly-clad beggars offering to pray for them. The shrine of the saint, containing his “uncorrupted body,” which it is the great object



of pilgrims to see, is shaped like an enormous four-post bedstead. It is about twenty feet high, and is of solid silver. The pilgrims to whom the "uncorrupted body" was shown threw themselves on their knees at the sight of it, and sobbed and smote their breasts. To them this was the actual St. Sergius who defeated the Tartars, whose figure was seen hovering above the monastery during its siege by the Poles, who again through the miraculous appearance of his army of monks saved the Troitza from the desecration of the French in 1812,\* and who still cures believers of all sorts of ailments. I went on, however, to the monasterial painting academy, where twenty "artists" and thirty "artists' pupils" were at work, and painting, not from Byzantine *eikons* or from any sort of præ-Raphaelite pictures, but from copies and engravings of Raphael himself, of Leonardo, and even of Horace Vernet. I was glad to find that Russia was liberating her artistic serfs, and that even in the ancient monastery of the Troitza a Raphaelite and post-Raphaelite school was being formed. In a small picture-gallery adjoining the studio, between a portrait of the Emperor and one of the Metropolitans of Moscow, was a

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\* Innocent, Archbishop of Odessa, in one of his sermons to the garrison of Sebastopol (published in the *Russian Messenger*), predicted a fourth reappearance of this patriotic saint.



spirited representation of the assault on the Troitza by the Polish besiegers. I had still to visit the ramparts and to ascend the golden-headed bell-tower, which rises high above the red and green roofs of the monastery, and the glittering cupolas and crosses of its numerous churches and cathedrals. How they shone in the clear, dry atmosphere from the midst of the interminable snow which surrounded the Laura on all sides, and which sparkled like diamonds in a sunshine that would have done credit to July! The blue sky was without a cloud, and the bars and delicate chains of gold of the church-tops seemed to burn beneath the rays of the mid-day sun, which, however, gave little heat with its light, for at the Holy Well the water almost turned to ice as you bore it to your lips, and in a few seconds the wet glasses froze into fixtures wherever you set them down. I was given to understand that had I been sick, the water of the Holy Well would have cured me. There was nothing the matter with me, but I can testify that it did me no harm.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## WINTER—AT HOME AND IN THE STREETS.

It is said that people see the cold in Russia, and feel it in Italy. In Russia one certainly sees the cold, and it has never appeared to me at all necessary to go to Italy in order to feel it. Still, so great and effective are the precautions taken against the common enemy, that when fortified behind double, or perhaps treble, windows in a thick-walled house, and protected in your occasional *sorties* by a stout armour of fur, you have nothing to fear from the attacks of this most unmerciful assailant.

Russia in the summer is no more like Russia in the winter than a camp in time of peace is like a camp in presence of the enemy. Moreover, snow is one of the chief natural productions of the country; and without it Russia is as uninteresting as an orchard without



fruit. One always thinks of Russia in connection with its frosts, and of its frosts in connection with such great events as the campaign of 1812, or the winter of 1854 in the Crimea. Accordingly, a foreigner in Russia naturally looks forward to the winter with much interest, mingled perhaps with a certain amount of awe. He waits for it, in fact, as a man waits for a thief, expecting the visitor with a certain kind of apprehension, and not without a due provision of life-preservers in the shape of goloshes, seven-leagued boots, scarves, fur coats, &c.

The house I lived in was in the middle of Moscow; and with the exception of the stoves, the internal arrangement seemed like that of most other dwellings in Europe. The Russian stoves however, are, in fact, thick hollow party-walls, built of brick, and sometimes separating, or connecting, as many as three or four rooms, and heating them all from one common centre. The outer sides of these lofty intramural furnaces are usually faced with a kind of white porcelain, though in some houses they are papered like the rest of the wall, so that the presence of the stove is only known in summer by two or three apertures like port-holes, which have been made for the purpose of admitting the hot air, and which, when there is no heat within, are closed with round metal covers like the tops of canisters. Sometimes, especially in country houses, the stove, or *peitchka* as it is called, is not only a wall,



but a wall which, towards the bottom, projects so as to form a kind of dresser or sofa, and which the lazier of the inmates use not unfrequently in the latter capacity. In the huts the *peitchka* is almost invariably of this form ; and the peasants not only lie and sleep upon it as a matter of course, but even get inside and use it as a bath. Not that they fill their stoves with water—that would be rather difficult. But the Russian bath is merely a room paved with stone slabs and heated like an oven, in which the bather stands to be rubbed and lathered, and to have buckets of water poured over him, or thrown at him, by naked attendants ; and accordingly a stove makes an excellent bath on a small scale. As a general rule, every row of huts has one or more baths attached to it, which the inhabitants support by subscription ; but when this is not the case, the peasant, after carefully raking out the ashes, creeps into the hot *peitchka*, and is soon bathed in his own perspiration. He would infallibly be baked alive but for the pailfuls of water with which he soon begins to cool his heated skin. Thanks, however, to this precaution, he issues from the fiery furnace uninjured, and, it is to be hoped, benefited.

When a stove is being heated, the port-holes are kept carefully shut, to prevent the egress of carbonic-acid gas. But after the wood has become thoroughly charred, and every vestige of flame has disappeared, the chimney is closed on a level with the garret floor,



the covers are removed from the apertures in the side of the stove, and the hot air is allowed to penetrate freely into the room ; which, if enough wood has been put into the *peitchka*, and the lid of the chimney closes hermetically, will, by this one fire, be kept warm for twelve or fourteen hours.

Occasionally it happens that the port-holes are opened while there still flickers a little blue flame above the whitening embers. In this case there is death in the stove. The carbonic-acid gas, which is still proceeding from the burning charcoal, enters the room, and produces asphyxia, or at all events some of its symptoms. If you have not time, or if you are already too weak, to open the door when you find yourself attacked by *ougar* (as the Russians call this gas), you had better throw the first thing you have at hand through the window ; and the cold air, rushing rapidly into the room, will save you. A foreigner unaccustomed to the hot apartments of Russia will scarcely perceive the presence of *ougar* until he is already seriously affected by it ; and in this manner the son of the Persian ambassador lost his life, some years since, in one of the principal hotels of Moscow. A native, however, if the stove should chance to be “ covered ” before the wood is thoroughly charred, will detect the presence of the fatal gas almost instantaneously ; and having done so, the best remedy he can adopt for the headache and sickness, which even



then will inevitably follow, is to rush into the open air, and cool his temples by copious applications of snow. Persons who are almost insensible from the effect of *ougar* have to be carried out and rolled in the snow,—a process which speedily restores them to their natural condition.

The attention of the stranger on entering a Russian house is at once attracted by the *eikon*, or image of the Saviour, the Virgin, or some saint, in one of the corners of each room. The reader is aware that the Russians, like the rest of the Eastern Church, are half iconoclasts; and that their religion excludes statuary, but enjoins the use of consecrated pictures. These images or ornamented paintings (the ornaments may be in the highest possible relief, but the images must not be literally *graven* images) are the Russian household gods, and are found in the rooms of every habitation, rich or poor, great or small. They attract your notice in the dismal cabins of the little steam-tugs which ply between Cronstadt and St. Petersburg, otherwise completely destitute of furniture; and you may discover them in the magnificent galleries of the Hermitage, where they naturally make but a mean appearance in presence of the masterpieces of Italian and Flemish art. The holy pictures belong, one and all, to the Byzantine school. The glory round the head of the Saviour or Virgin is of solid metal—sometimes of silver or gold, but usually of brass, or at best of silver



gilt; and when the image does not stand in a favourable light, the halo, which is alone visible, looks like a horse-shoe nailed to the wall. Sometimes the whole of the garments are covered with gilt plate, and the only parts of the painting which can be seen are the face and hands; so that many of these compositions deserve to be looked upon as so much goldsmith's work rather than as productions of art.\* Many of them—though fewer than formerly—are, indeed, manufactured in the true sense of the word at Souzdal, a town in the government of Vladimir, which is celebrated for its images, as Toulâ is famous for its hardwares, Tarjok for its embroidered leather, and so on. There are seldom more than three colours employed, and each of these has its own separate set of artists (or journeymen, as they may with more propriety be termed), just as in the now obsolete horn-bands of Russia each note had its own particular executant. The only point at all remarkable in the workmanship of the Souzdal fraternity is the fineness and evenness of the colouring. The painting is executed on a perfectly smooth surface

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\* The most celebrated specimen of the class is the immortal panagia of the Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin, which is nothing less (as the faithful affirm) than the Virgin, painted by St. Luke himself. It is surrounded by a frame of solid gold, and decorated with a jewelled halo, of which the principal ruby is worth 80,000 roubles; while the total value of the gold-work and precious stones is said to amount to 200,000 roubles.



of very hard wood; the painter dilutes his colour with large quantities of oil, and as he progresses polishes his work with a preparation of pumice-stone. When the artificer in red has finished his portion of the performance, he hands it to the artificer in yellow, who in his turn passes it on to the artificer in blue; then the worker in metal affixes the halo; and all is ready for the frame-maker, if a frame happens to be required. There are shops in every large town devoted exclusively to the sale of *eikons*: and an *eikon* is the only thing in Russia which is bought and sold without the least haggling about the price. For to attempt to cry down the value, even in a commercial sense, of a holy image, would be considered worse than unbecoming, while any attempt at extortion on the part of the vendor would be equally culpable.

The size of the images is generally in inverse proportion to the social rank of the person whose habitation they sanctify and adorn. In the booths of that permanent fair, the Gastinnoi Dvor, they assume the dimensions of historical pictures, for the Russian dealer is as devout as he is cunning. In the private residences of the merchants of the first guild they are about as large as *genre* paintings; while in the houses of the nobles they seldom extend beyond the modest limits of a miniature. The smallest *eikon* I ever saw was in the dining-room of the Nobles' Club at Moscow, where, close to the ceiling in the eastern corner, is a



black little image, looking at a distance like the queen of spades, and certainly not much bigger.

Facing the house in which I lived on my first visit to Moscow were two detached houses, with the usual court-yards. One of them had white walls and a high sloping roof of dark-red sheet-iron; the walls of the other were painted a very light yellow, and its roof was of a pale green. The light-yellow walls enclosed a Tartar family, of which the most interesting portion—to a stranger at least—was never visible.

The men, on the other hand, were most liberal in exhibiting themselves. They were constantly to be seen in their gaudy silken dressing-gowns, and their round skull-caps ribbed with red and yellow. Sometimes these Tartars would make incursions into my apartments, and insist on selling me shawls, silks, and above all, dressing-gowns, at eight times their original cost. On another occasion they would come over with propositions for disposing of a ton of Indian ink to a friend of mine, whom they happened to see making a sketch, and who they were determined should not be stopped in his pursuit of art by want of materials. Probably horse-flesh is difficult to digest; for every day after each meal the Tartars would spend three or four hours sitting or lying down on the stone bench in front of their dwelling, and immediately opposite my windows. In the early part of September the bench did not occupy altogether more than four or five hours



of their time, and by the middle of the month they had nearly abandoned it. One morning about that period I observed a little puddle in the street with ice on the top, and from that day the Tartars took to digesting their horse-flesh indoors. Then to my alarm one of them came out again with a fur-coat, or *shouba*, which he began to brush with much care, as though he expected before long to have use for it. A few days afterwards I saw a sledge being conveyed along the street on the top of a cart laden with fire-wood.

The next morning there was a fall of snow; and the cream was brought in from the country in jars wrapped carefully round with matting to prevent its freezing. Hundreds of cabbages and thousands of potatoes, similarly protected, were purchased and stowed away. Furlongs of wood (in Russia wood is sold by the foot) were laid up in the court-yard; an inspector of stoves arrived to see that every *peitchka* was in proper working order; and an examiner and fitter-in of windows was summoned to adjust the usual extra sash. At last the windows had been made fast, each pane being at the same time re-puttied into its frame. On the window-sill, in the space between the outer and inner panes, was something resembling a long deep line of snow, which was, however, merely a mass of cotton-wool placed there as an additional protection against the external air. Indeed, the winds of the Russian winter have such powers of penetration that, in a room



guarded by *triple* windows, besides shutters closed with the greatest exactness, I have seen the curtains slightly agitated when the howling outside was somewhat louder than usual. "The wind," says Gregorovitch in his "Winter's Tale," "howls like a dog; and like a dog will bite the feet and calves of those who have not duly provided themselves with fur-goloshes and doubly-thick pantaloons." Such a wind must not be suffered to intrude into any house intended to be habitable.

Besides the cotton-wool, which is a special provision against draughts, the space between the two sashes is usually adorned with artificial flowers; indeed, the fondness of the Russians for flowers and green leaves during the winter is remarkable. The corridors are converted into greenhouses, by means of trellis-work covered with creepers. The windows of many of the apartments are encircled by evergreens, and in the drawing-rooms, flower-stands form the principal ornaments. At the same time enormous sums are paid for bouquets from the hot-houses which abound in both the capitals. Doubtless the long winters have some share in the production of this passion for flowers and green plants, just as love of country is increased by exile, and love of liberty by imprisonment.

There are generally at least two heavy snow-storms by way of warning before winter fairly commences its reign. The first fall of snow thaws perhaps a few days afterwards, the second in about a week, the third in



five months. If a lady drops her bracelet or brooch in the street during the period of this third fall, she need not trouble herself to put out handbills offering a reward for its discovery, at all events not before the spring; for it will be preserved in its hiding-place, as well as ice can preserve it, until about the middle of April, when, if the amount of the reward be greater than the value of the article lost, it will in all probability be restored to her. The Russians put on their furs at the first signs of winter, and the sledges make their appearance in the streets as soon as the snow is an inch or two thick. Of course at such a time a sledge is far from possessing any advantage over a carriage on wheels; but the Russians welcome their appearance with so much enthusiasm, that the first sledge-drivers are sure of excellent receipts for several days. The droshkies disappear one by one with the black mud of autumn; and by the time the gilt cupolas of the churches, and the red and green roofs of the houses, have been made whiter than their own walls, the city swarms with sledges. It is not, however, until near Christmas, when the "frost of St. Nicholas" sets in, that they are seen in all their glory. The earlier frosts of October and November may or may not be attended to without any very dangerous results ensuing; but when the frigid St. Nicholas makes his appearance,—staying the most rapid currents, forming bridges over the broadest rivers, and converting seas into deserts of



ice,—then a blast from his breath, if not properly guarded against, may prove fatal. However, foreigners alone are afraid of him. He is the Russian's best friend. Of the Russian peasant he is not only the patron-saint, but also the real benefactor. He is the greatest engineer in the country, and does more in the department of roads and bridges in a single night than the notorious Kleinmichel did in the whole course of his ministry. But when he approaches you, you must not go out to meet him otherwise than in a garment of fur, or the disrespect may be visited upon you with severity. This is the sole return he requires for his services in enabling you to receive the veal of Archangel and the beef of the Steppes, which can only be transported in winter along his excellent roads.

The first time I visited Moscow St. Nicholas was nearly playing false to his devotees. The winter appeared to have set in for a continuance in November, and provisions were beginning to arrive from the country, when suddenly there was a thaw, and soon afterwards the smaller rivers, which, as they freeze the first, are also the first to break up, were pronounced unsafe. Accordingly the peasants, on arriving with their sledges at the Oka, distant about twenty miles from Moscow, waited on its banks before risking their precious lives, and, what was more important, their valuable provisions, on its treacherous ice. As the thaw continued, the river became in some places quite impassable, and the



peasants found themselves in this dilemma: if they attempted to cross the Oka, they and the contents of their sledges might be lost together; but if they remained where they were, the poultry and meat which they had intended to convey to Moscow would inevitably spoil, and they would have to return home without provisions and without money. Now the peasants on their road to the Moscow markets take their meals at the wayside inns on credit, and pay as they go home after they have effected a sale; so that to return without money was out of the question. Accordingly *rustici expectaverunt*, and in this case with some reason; for though it was beginning to flow, the river was certainly not destined to roll on *in omne volubilis ævum*. In the midst of the difficulty, like the devil in a German legend, a Jew appeared on the banks of the Oka. The provisions were still sound, and the Oka, though now nearly free from ice, might be converted into a hard road almost in a single night. At all events, if the frost once recommenced, the provisions were safe; and a Jew can always wait for his money, if by a few days' delay it will become tripled and quadrupled. Accordingly the Hebrew offered some sort of pottage on the spot for the right of taking all the sledges with their contents to the Moscow markets as soon as an opportunity presented itself. Whether he also offered something to St. Nicholas is unknown; but that night the mercury fell, the next morning the ground was covered



with snow, and before evening the Oka was again a road, and the sledges on their way to the "Frozen Market" of Moscow, where they arrived just in time for the Nikolski fête.

The Frozen Market is one of the most curious in Moscow which abounds in markets of a curious kind. There is the market for the hiring of domestic servants; the horse-market, beloved by gipsies; the market for earthen pots, and the market for wooden pails. There is the fruit-market, especially pleasing to foreigners from its delicious water-melons in the autumn, and its admirable frozen apples, like lumps of apple-ice, in the winter. There is the hay-market, where, besides hay, cream, butter, eggs, and all kinds of farm produce are exposed for sale. There is the market of the Soukhareff Tower, for the sale of furniture, clothes, sledges, tea-urns, screw-drivers, rusty nails, secondhand books, and especially stray numbers of the "Russian Messenger," the "Contemporary," the "National Annals," the "Muscovite," and other indigenous reviews. Then there is the market for odoriferous sheepskins and moth-eaten *shoubas*, vamped-up winter-boots, huge leather gloves, shaped like babies' mittens, Cossack and Circassian caps, felt goloshes, caftans, and girdles, to say nothing of fish-pies, salted cucumbers, boiled liver, raspberry kvass, black bread, and other "delicacies of the season," for buyers and sellers; a market whose popular and emphatic name is "Louse Market," and



where you may have your handkerchief stolen from you at one end and offered to you for sale at the other. But none of these markets are so strikingly Russian as the Frozen Market. It is not until the fête of St. Nicholas—or later still, the week between Christmas and the new year—that this strange exhibition is to be seen in all its glory. By that time the severe period of winter has fairly set in. The soldiers, tall, stalwart men, are wearing their long grey coats over their heavy knapsacks, which bulge out and make them look like so many hunchbacks; while the broad black bandages which protect their ears and cheeks give them the appearance of persons suffering from tooth-ache. The cold has indeed had some effect upon them; for as they march in from the country, their raw faces are as red as beef, and their frozen moustaches as white as horse-radish. Every *moujik* with his long and literally snow-white beard looks like an allegorical figure of Winter. The blackest horses are now piebald, thanks to the hoar-frost which has decorated their sides; while the congelation of their breath round the long hairs that project from their nostrils adds to the peculiarity of their appearance, and furnishes them with a set of spikes such as calves wear in weaning-time.

But although the drivers and horses of the sledges, as they hurry towards the market-place, form a by no means uninteresting part of the exhibition, their loads, when taken out and arranged with a view to sale,



present a picture which is far more striking. On one side you see a collection of frozen sheep,—stiff, ghastly, objects,—some poised on their hoofs like the wooden animals in a child's "Noah's Ark;" others on their sides, with their legs projecting exactly at right angles to their bodies; others, again, on their backs, with their feet in the air, after the manner of inverted tables. The oxen are only less grotesque from having been cleft down the back—an operation which seems to take them out of the category of oxen and place them in that of beef. The pigs are drawn up in line against a wall, standing on their hind-legs with their fore-feet extended above their heads, in an attitude of exhortation.

Among the poultry and game, the hares are especially remarkable, from the fact that their fur, which through the summer is either brown or gray, has at the approach of winter turned completely white; a provision of nature which enables the Russian and Siberian hare to travel through the snow in quest of food with a certain amount of impunity, though for all that it never fails to be represented at the winter-markets of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The partridges, quails, grouse, heath-cocks, wood-hens, &c., are lying together in a frozen mass; and by their side are the ducks and geese, with outstretched necks, so straight and stiff that you might take one of these harmless birds by the bill, and, using it as a bludgeon, knock



your enemy down with the body. The fowls have been plucked, plunged into water, and left to freeze. Thus they are completely encased in ice, and in that condition will keep for any time. And to think that Newton wished to satisfy himself by experiment that fowls could be so preserved, and that the experiment cost him his life! What would a *moujik* think of such a philosopher?

Besides game of every kind, not only from the neighbouring governments, but even from Finland and Siberia, the markets of St. Petersburg and Moscow are supplied with fish from every sea and river in the empire. Lomonossov, the earliest Russian poet, the author of the first Russian dictionary, and one of the most celebrated chemists and natural philosophers the country ever produced, made his first appearance in St. Petersburg with a sledge-load of fish from the White Sea, where his father gained his living as a fisherman. The Black Sea and the Caspian also contribute largely. The Don sends its sturgeons, after the roe has been duly extracted for the purpose of making caviar; and the Volga its rich, oily, yellow-fleshed sterlet, invaluable for fish-soup. The presence of the sterlet is the more welcome in the winter-markets from the fact that this delicately-organized and exquisitely-flavoured fish will only live in the water of the Volga. But in winter there is no necessity for it to live at all after it has once been caught, as it can be conveyed in its frozen state



to the extremities of the empire without losing any of its freshness, or any very perceptible amount of its taste.

The mode of catching fish in the winter is simple enough. A hole is made in the ice, and the fish rush to it for the sake of the air. Then, in the case of the sturgeons of the Don, the Cossacks "of that ilk" harpoon them; while elsewhere the smaller fish, equally in want of air, precipitate themselves into the nets that await them, and thus get, if not out of the frying-pan into the fire, at least out of the ice into the frying-pan.

Another peculiarity of the Frozen Market is, that it takes place in the middle of an improvised wood,—a wood which suggests the forest in "Macbeth," and which is composed entirely of evergreens for Christmas-trees. Beneath the shade of this portable thicket are sold brooms, wooden spades for clearing away the snow from before the houses, and the hand-sledges in which servants and shopmen draw their parcels through the streets; for it would be out of the question to carry anything at all heavy or cumbersome when by such simple means it may be pulled with ease along the slippery pavement.

Nor must I forget the itinerant vendors of sucking-pigs, who start from the Frozen Market with whole litters of the interesting little animals, not much larger than guinea-pigs, hanging from their necks and waists;



nor the dealers in dried mushrooms, who string those leathern delicacies together like pieces of brown paper on the tail of a kite, and wear them in garlands about their sheep-skinned persons. A similar kind of pedlar is to be found in the man who is hung all over with chains and rings of thin whity-brown bread,—doubtless a friend to the owner of the tumbler and tea-urn, who walks about the commercial quarter and sells hot tea to the bearded and caftaned merchants.

It has been said that it is not until the *Nikòlskoi Maros*, or Frost of St. Nicholas, that the sledges fly through the streets in all their glory. By that time the rich “*boyars*” \* (as foreigners persist in styling the Russian proprietors of the present day) have arrived from their estates, and the poor peasants, who have long ceased to till the ground, and have now thrashed all the corn, begin to come in from theirs; for, humble and dependent as he may be, each peasant has nevertheless his own patch of land. For the former are the elegant sledges of polished nut-wood, with rugs of soft thick fur to protect the legs of the occupants; whose drivers, in their green caftans fastened round the waist with red sashes, and in their square thickly-wadded caps of crimson velvet, like sofa-cushions, urge on the prodi-

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\* It would be equally correct to speak of the English nobility of the present day as “the barons.”



giously fast trotting horses, at the same time throwing themselves back in their seats with outstretched arms and tightened reins, as though the animals were madly endeavouring to escape from their control. The latter bring with them certain strongly-made wooden boxes, with a seat at the back for two passengers and a perch in front for a driver. These boxes are put upon rails, and called sledges. The bottom of each box (or sledge) is plentifully strewn with hay, which after a few days becomes converted, by mean of snow and dirty goloshes, into something very like manure. The driver is immediately in front of you, with his brass badge hanging on his back like the label on a box of sardines. He wears a sheepskin; but it is notorious that after ten years' wear the sheepskin loses its odour, besides which it is winter, so that your sense of smell has really nothing to fear. The one thing necessary is to keep your legs to yourself, or at all events not to obtrude them beneath the perch of the driver, or you will run the chance of having your foot crushed by that gentleman's heel. Sometimes the horse is fresh from the plough, and requires a most vigorous application of the driver's thong to induce him to quit his accustomed pace; but for the most part the animals are willing enough, and as rapid as their masters are skilful. The driver is generally much attached to his horse, whom he affectionately styles his "dove" or his "pigeon," assuring him that although the ground is covered with



snow, there is still grass in the stable for his *galoupchik*—as the favourite bird is called, &c., &c.

As for the real pigeons and doves, they are to be found everywhere,—on the belfries of the churches, in the court-yards of the houses, in the streets blocking up the pavement, and above all, beneath the projecting edges of the roofs, where you may see them clustering in long deep lines like black cornices. But the holy bird appears to the greatest advantage in the poulterer's shop, where, conscious of the kind of divinity that hedges a pigeon, he struts about among the carcasses of his fellow-flutterers, first examining the breast of a partridge, then devoting his attention to the plumage of a quail, and never fearing for an instant lest the slaughterer of so many of his species should irreverently lay hands on *his* sacred head.

Aware of the immunity accorded to the pigeon, the gray crow presumes upon a certain distant resemblance to inhabit the same localities, and, thanks to his uneatable nature, is but seldom knocked on the head. Some years since the magpie was also an inhabitant of Moscow, until one day a distinguished metropolitan of the Greek Church undertook the expulsion of the tribe. The "facts" of the affair were briefly as follows:—The metropolitan was about to lay the foundation-stone of a new church, when, at the very moment for applying the mortar, the golden trowel could not be found. A workman who happened to be



in the vicinity of the metropolitan, and who enjoyed no very brilliant character for honesty, was suspected, accused, sentenced, knouted, and sent to Siberia. But scarcely had the unfortunate man reached Tobolsk, when the trowel was discovered by the bell-ringers at the top of the celebrated tower, or belfry, of Ivan Veliki, whither it had been carried by some magpie, who was evidently acquainted with the plot of *La Gazza Ladra*. Upon this the metropolitan cursed the magpies, as a less virtuous person might have done under the same circumstances; and the birds thus anathematized flew out of Moscow, and have never since ventured within thirty miles of the holy city. In reality the magpies do keep at a respectful distance—which of course proves the truth of the whole story.

It will be asked how all the pigeons manage to subsist. In the first place, they are fed by good-natured persons, who are gratified to find their pensioners coming regularly every morning for their meals. In this way Kriloff, the Russian fable-writer, is said to have entertained all the pigeons of the Gastinnoi Dvor for a considerable period. Then they have the free run of the poulterer's shop, where they consume a large portion of the corn intended for fowls that are fattening for the knife. Moreover, there are nearly sixty thousand horses \* in Moscow during the winter (about

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\* Tegoborski, in his work on the Productive Forces of Russia, tells us that in Moscow the number of horses is equal to 20 per cent. of



one for every five persons), and wherever there are horses there is food to some extent for pigeons.

Among the sixty thousand horses which Moscow is said to possess, a large number are of great beauty ; and their elegant heads are seen to the more advantage from the absence of blinkers and the extreme lightness of the harness generally. The rarity of collisions in thoroughfares crowded with sledges, going in every direction, and every one of them at a pace which in Paris would insure the prosecution of the *isvostchik* for "furious driving," is to be attributed as much to the liberty left to the animals of using their own eyes as to the skill with which they are guided. Most of the English trainers in Russia now break their horses in to go without blinkers ; which, regarded in the light of a decoration, are about as ornamental to the head of a horse as an eye-shade is to that of a man.

Besides the private sledges and the sledges from the country, there are town-sledges of various degrees of excellence, some of which can vie in every respect with the best private ones. You have a comfortable seat, a fashionably-picturesque driver, an excellent fur for your knees, and probably a scarlet net covering the back of the swift white horse, and attached to the front of the sledge, so as to guard your face from the lumps

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the population. In St. Petersburg they only represent 7 per cent. ; while in Simbirsk they amount to as many as 72 per cent.



of frozen snow which might otherwise be kicked into it. These magnificent *isvostchiks* occupy the same proud position as the Hansom cabmen in London, or the drivers of *remises* in Paris, and look down with deep and openly-expressed contempt on their country-bred competitors, whom they upbraid with the unkempt condition of their horses and the inelegant form of their vehicles. But the rustic driver, with his meekness and civility, is not to be spurned. In the words of a touching proverb, "he wears the skin of a sheep, but he has the heart of a man;" and it is astonishing how far he will drive for fourpence.

In Moscow no one thinks of walking during the winter, except perhaps on one of the boulevards, when the weather is particularly fine. In fact, the people are clothed so warmly and so heavily, that to walk any distance is really impossible. Sometimes, it is true, a man may be seen in the depth of winter wearing no fur at all, in which case you may be sure he will understand you if you address him in English. And you may be almost equally certain that he has not been more than a year in Russia; for our countrymen, though they stand the first winter to the admiration, or rather the astonishment, of every one, generally find it necessary to adopt fur-clothing for the second. Indeed, it is not the mere unpleasantness of cold which has to be guarded against; it is the danger resulting from the great and sudden change of temperature to



which one is exposed, in going out on rather a cold day from a warm room into the open air, or, in other words, from a temperature of  $16^{\circ}$  (Réaumur) above freezing-point to one of  $16^{\circ}$  below it.\*

It appears strange to assert that, in a country where every year men are frozen to death, the accounts of the cold are nevertheless much exaggerated. However, it requires no very low temperature for a human being to freeze to death in it, if he takes care beforehand to get drunk and go to sleep, and does not awake before the warmth produced by the alcohol has left his body. Travellers speak of the cold represented by  $30^{\circ}$  and  $35^{\circ}$  Réaumur as if it were nothing extraordinary; but the thermometer does not mark  $30^{\circ}$  more than once in about twenty years. It appears from the records of the observatory, that in seventeen years the average maximum of cold at St. Petersburg was  $21\frac{2}{5}^{\circ}$ ; and, in 1840, it was mentioned as an extraordinary fact that the thermometer had marked  $30^{\circ}$  on the 9th of February, 1810. However, at Moscow it rarely happens that the mercury does not descend to  $25^{\circ}$  for a few days in the winter. Every third or fourth year it sinks to  $27^{\circ}$  or  $28^{\circ}$ . At  $28^{\circ}$  the birds will sometimes fall frozen from the house-tops; and a few years ago, when the thermometer was at  $29^{\circ}$  and  $30^{\circ}$ , pigeons were seen

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\* A difference of  $72^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit.



to become paralyzed and drop as they were flying through the air. Probably, however, they were half frozen before they took wing, and only did so on being ejected forcibly from their hiding-places.

For a good portable thermometer there is nothing better than a tolerably thick moustache. It will scarcely become stiff from frost at less than  $10^{\circ}$  (always of Réaumur's thermometer); at  $15^{\circ}$  it becomes a solid mass; and at  $20^{\circ}$  you cannot walk twice as many yards without having ice enough on your upper lip for a small sherry-cobbler. I once lived for three minutes and a half in a temperature of  $26^{\circ}$ . It was about half an hour after sunset, the streets were full of gloom, and I felt as if the cold would dissolve me; whereas, if left to itself, it would of course have hardened me into a solid concrete mass. (Thus a friend of mine saw a man carried with frozen feet from his sledge into a hut by the side of the road; who, by way of showing how completely his toes were ice-bound, tapped them with his walking-stick, when a hard sound was heard such as would be produced by a similar operation on a piece of marble.) Ladies have their thermometers as well as men. First of all there is the veil, which stiffens with the frozen breath of the wearer at only a few degrees below freezing-point; then there is the handkerchief, which, if made of the softest cambric, will in a certain number of seconds harden into something like the coarsest canvas; and



lastly, there are the cheeks—and, above all, that celebrated test the nose, which I declare I had almost forgotten. The appearance of the nose, then, is very useful in indicating the exact amount of cold you happen to be suffering to another person; and when it turns white it is a clear proof that it is frost-bitten: but it would be rather difficult to perceive this yourself, and all you can do is to feel it from time to time, if you do not mind making yourself ridiculous in the eyes of the passers-by. If you should suddenly discover that your nose has become as hard as stone, you will feel no immediate inconvenience; but unless you begin rubbing it with snow, you will lose it as soon as it thaws. Every one who has read an account of a winter in Russia has met with the great nose anecdote, of which I like M. Alexandre Dumas' telling (in *Le Maître d'Armes*) better than any one else's. Not that I ever saw any man run up to any other man in the street, cry out *noss! noss!* and rub his nose with snow. On the contrary, though from the first frost to the last thaw, I was constantly on the lookout for that well-known incident of winter life in Russia, it never occurred in my presence; which is the more mortifying, inasmuch as other visitors to Russia have succeeded in witnessing it who had been only a few weeks, and, in some cases, only a few days, in the country.

Of course a very large portion of the population,



that is to say, all who are engaged in agriculture, as well as builders, and generally those who labour out of doors, are thrown out of work at the approach of winter. But the change is not, as it would be in other countries, from profitable work to destitution, but merely from one kind of labour to another. All these men have at least two trades, one for the winter and the other for the summer ; and doubtless the well-known facility with which the Russian workman varies his occupation may be to some extent accounted for by the inevitable change which takes place in his employment and habits every autumn and every spring. By the time the corn has been threshed the streams which turn the water-mills are covered with ice, the soil is frost-bound, and in the towns, building has become utterly impossible, if only from the fact that a few minutes' exposure to the air would harden the mortar into stone. But the miller will take to weaving, the bricklayer will become a carpenter, the ploughman will turn sledge-driver. Some, as we have seen, will take provisions to the towns, and numbers of peasants will go to work in the factories, which are always unusually brisk during the winter months, whereas in the summer there is frequently a difficulty in procuring hands. And I have been assured, not by Russians, but by Englishmen from Lancashire, and Frenchmen from Alsace, that the readiness with which the Russian *moujik* adapts himself to any kind of work,



whether spinning, weaving, printing, or even machine-engraving, is marvellous.

There are certain callings also which belong exclusively to the winter. For instance, there is the sweep, whose occupation is entirely gone with the frost. Fortunately, however, the sweep can work with the spade as well as with the broom. Then there is the extra *dvornik*, or porter, who sits outside the *porte-cochère*, in his capacious sheepskin (like a garment of tripe), while his fellow-*dvornik* is warming himself indoors, or *vice-versâ*. In summer, one *dvornik* suffices, but the extra *dvornik* is luckily an excellent gardener. Speaking of gardeners, what a curious spectacle a procession of "frozen-out gardeners," such as is sometimes seen in England, would be to a Russian! Probably it would lead him to reflect on the disadvantages of a temperate climate, where, thanks to the entire absence of precautions, we suffer more from heat than in India, and more from cold than in Siberia.

But to return to the alternating system in Russia. It has at least one advantage—that of abolishing the "slack season," the period of *chômage*, during which the workman in France and England is frequently reduced to the position of a pauper. It also appears to relieve labour of a certain portion of its drudgery; the toil becomes less mechanical, and with each change of occupation a certain amount of energy is developed. Of course an excess of variety would



render some kinds of skilled labour impossible, on the principle that "Jack-of-all-trades is master of none;" and, if carried beyond a certain point, might be the means of turning a nation of industrious men into a horde of vagabonds. But there is no reason why a labourer should be either a mere townsman or a mere rustic; and the union of city occupations with those of the country might be expected—other things being equal—to give a certain superiority to the working classes of Russia over those of other nations.

Doubtless the sight is not benefited by the perpetual white, slightly relieved in the towns by the swarms of dark-blue pigeons on the house-tops, and the gray dust of the great thoroughfares, when neither a thaw nor a snow-storm has recently taken place, and when the frozen mud and snow have been pounded and ground into a gravelly powder by the hoofs of the horses, and the iron-bound rails of the sledges. But as far as the pleasures of the eye are concerned, it may be said that the snow of a Russian winter is less disagreeable than the black mud, the gray mist, and the dirty-yellow fog of the same season in Great Britain. At home we associate snow with darkness and gloom; but, when once the snow has fallen, the sky of Moscow is as bright and as blue as that of Italy; the atmosphere is clear and pure; the sun shines for several hours in the day with a brightness from which the reflection of the snow becomes perfectly dazzling;



and if the frost be intense, there is not a breath of wind. The breath that really does attract your notice is that of the pedestrians, who appear to be blowing forth columns of smoke or steam into the rarefied atmosphere, and who look like so many walking chimneys or human locomotives. And if breath looks like smoke, smoke itself looks almost solid. Rise early, when the fires are being lighted which are to heat the stoves through the entire day, and if the thermometer outside your window marks more than  $15^{\circ}$ , you will see the gray columns rising heavily into the air, until at a certain height the smoke remains stationary, and hangs in clouds above the houses. Looking from some great elevation, such as the tower of Ivan Veliki in the Kremlin, you see these clouds beneath you, agitated like waves, and forming a kind of nebulous sea, which is, however, soon taken up by the surrounding atmosphere.

It is astonishing how much cold one can support when the sky is bright and the sun shining; certainly ten or fifteen degrees more by Réaumur's thermometer, than when the day is dark and gloomy. And the effect is the same on all. On one of these fine frosty days there is unwonted cheerfulness in the look, unwonted energy in the movements of every one you meet. If there were the slightest wind with so keen a temperature, you would feel, every time it grazed your face, as if you were being shaved with a



blunt razor,—for to be cut with a sharp one is comparatively nothing. But the air is calm; and as the day exhilarates you generally, it makes you walk more briskly than you are in the habit of doing in your *shouba* of cloth, wadding, and fur; and the result is, you are so warm and so surrounded by sunshine, that, but for seeing the cold, you might fancy yourself on the shores of the Mediterranean instead of on the banks of the Moskva, which is now a long, shiny, serpent-like path of ice. In London, on a damp, foggy, sunless winter's day, when the thermometer is not quite down to freezing-point, the system is so depressed by the atmosphere and the cheerless aspect of the streets, that you feel the cold more acutely than you would do on a sunshiny morning in Moscow with ten degrees of frost. In St. Petersburg, where the winter sun is, “as in northern climes, but dimly bright,” and where the city is frequently enveloped in a mist (which is, however, ethereal vapour compared to the opaque fogs of London), the cold is, on the same principle, more severely felt than in Moscow. Nevertheless, in St. Petersburg people go about far more lightly clad than in the more southern towns of the empire,—for St. Petersburg is half a foreign city, and the numerous pedestrians have found it necessary to reject the ponderous *shouba* for a long wadded *paletot* with a fur-collar. The real Russian *shouba* is undoubtedly very warm; for it enables the Moscow



merchant to go upon 'Change, which in the old capital, during the coldest weather, is held in the open air. But, as the reader has been already informed, it is almost impossible to walk in it.

In considering the advantages and disadvantages of a Russian winter, one should not forget the question of rain. It is evident, then, that where there is frost there can be no rain; and accordingly, for nearly six months in the year, you can dispense altogether with that most unpleasant encumbrance, the umbrella. For it must be remembered that in Russia the snow does not fall in the soft feathery flakes to which we are accustomed in more temperate latitudes. It comes down in showers of microscopic darts, which, instead of intercepting the light of the sun, like the arrows of Xerxes' army, glitter and sparkle in its rays as they reflect them in every direction. The minute crystals, or rather crystalline fragments, can be at once shaken from the collars of fur, on the points of which they hang like needles, but above all like Epsom salts; and on the cloth of the men's *shoubas* and the satin of the women's cloaks they have scarcely any hold.

The most pleasant time of the whole winter is during the moonlight nights, when the wind is still and the snow deep on the ground. In the streets the sparkling *trottoir*, which appears literally paved with diamonds, is as hard as the agate floor of the Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Kremlin. In the country,



where alone you can enjoy the night in all its beauty, the frozen surface crunches, but scarcely sinks, beneath the sledge, as your *troika* tears along the road as fast as the centre horse can trot and the two outsiders gallop. For it is a peculiarity of the *troika* that the three horses which constitute it are harnessed abreast; and that while the one in the shafts, whose head is upheld by a bow, with a little bell suspended from the top, is trained to trot, and never to leave that pace, however fast he may be driven, the two who are harnessed outside must gallop, even if they gallop but six miles an hour; though it is far more likely that they will be called upon to do twelve. Lastly, the *troika* must present a fan-like front; to produce which the driver tightens the outside reins till the heads of the outriggers stand out at an angle of forty or fifty degrees from that of the horse in the shafts. At the same time the centre horse trots with his head high in the air, while the two whose existences are devoted to galloping have their noses depressed towards the ground, like bulls running at a dog.

There may be enough moonlight to read by when the moon itself is obscured by clouds. But if it shines directly on the white ermine-like snow, which covers the vast plains like an interminable carpet, the atmosphere becomes full of light, and the night in its brightness, its solitude, and its silence, broken only by



the bells of some distant team, reminds you of the calmness of an unusually quiet and beautiful day. As you turn away from the main road towards the woods, you pass groups of tall slender birch-trees, with their white silvery bark, and their delicate thread-like fibres hanging in frozen showers from the ends of the branches, and clothing the birch with a kind of icy foliage, while the other trees remain bare and ragged. The birch is eminently a winter tree, and its tresses of fibres, whether petrified and covered with crystals by the frost, or waving freely in the breeze which has stripped them of their snow, are equally ornamental. The ground is strewn with the shadows of the trees, traced with exquisite fineness on the white snow, from which these lunar photographs stand forth with wonderful distinctness. To drive out with an indefinite number of *troikas* to some village in the environs, or to the first station on one of the Government roads, is a common mode of spending a fine winter's night, and one which is equally popular in Moscow and St. Petersburg. These excursions, which always partake more or less of the nature of a pic-nic, form one of the chief pleasures of the cold season. Of course such expeditions also take place during the day, but, whatever the hour of the departure, if there happen to be a moon that night, the return is sure not to take place before it has made its appearance.

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## CHAPTER IX.

## FIRE AND WATER.

IN Moscow, besides the merchant in the *traktir*, who, active as he may be in business, is too indolent to cut up his own *pirog* or light his own pipe; the *moujik*, who, not only in his devotions, but in the presence of any superior from whom he has much to fear or to hope, executes a genuine *salaam*; the watchman, who in the Oriental style guards the house; and the pigeons, who enjoy a special protection utterly denied to them in the West, we find traces of the East, or at least that which recalls it, in the watch-towers of the city (with which the fire-brigades are connected), and above all the bath-houses, of which, as of the enormous *traktirs*, or tea-houses, there are but few good specimens to be found in St. Petersburg.

The reader must allow me to take a bath, and to see a fire, in his company.



The Russians in their ablutions have a preference for running streams over pools. This is noticeable, not only in the bathing, but in the ordinary mode of washing the hands and face in Russia. A Russian does not wash his hands in a basin, but holds them over a basin, and soaps them and rubs them together while his servant pours water over them. At present this is only a custom. But, like other customs, there must be a reason for its existence, and whether or not it is borrowed from the East (which it appears to be), it probably originates in a notion that the water, if the hands require washing at all, must become impure at the moment of contact. In the same way a person immersing himself in a bath must, by so doing, even if he has bathed only a few hours before, to some extent sully the water. To get into a series of baths would involve some trouble, and to avoid this inconvenience the Orientals (and after them the Russians) achieve the desired end by a truly Mahometan alternative: as they cannot throw themselves into a series of baths, they cause a series of baths to be thrown over them.

In Russian bath-houses of the best class there are public and private compartments: in those for working people there is only one general washing-place. A stranger may object to ablution in public—not, however, that he will be soused in the immediate vicinity of any one else; but, on the other hand, knowing nothing of the language, he may fear that in private



the attendant will boil him or stifle him beyond the hope of remedy. The Russians think no more of bathing in a general lavatory than of dining at a *table d'hôte*; though at baths, as at *restaurants*, some have their private rooms.

We will imagine ourselves, then, in the general dressing and undressing room—a large apartment with divans on every side. One or two men, newly drenched and scrubbed, are reclining on sofas, arrayed in gorgeous dressing-gowns, apparently provided by the establishment, smoking chibouks, and, perhaps, drinking tea. One or two more are undressing. About that process there can be no mistake. The stranger knows that he must begin by taking his clothes off. On one side of the room with the divans is an arch, through which may be perceived a suite of utterly unfurnished apartments, paved with large slabs, and resembling a succession of sculleries or a capacious slaughter-house. From these hot fumes proceed; and in the distance stands a naked victim with ensanguined skin, over whose tortured body a ruthless executioner is pouring buckets of water, which, from the steam it sends forth, must burn like liquid fire. But you are undressed, and must go through the ordeal.

You are received in the first scullery (let us call it nothing worse), or, if you hesitate, are led thereto by an attendant attired in the court costume of the King of the Cannibal Islands, *minus* the cocked hat and the



white kid gloves, which, it must be added, for the benefit of the uninformed, were the only articles of dress worn by that monarch on state occasions. But no, the attendant has a cross round his neck. In other respects he is less clothed than the models at the Government Academy of Paintings, who are not permitted by the paternal Minister of Fine Arts to appear in a state of utter nudity.

You have no occasion to speak. Indeed, the best thing you can do is to shut your mouth, for the attendant is about to throw a bucket of water at you. He throws it—it is tepid; then another, which is warmer; then another, which is much warmer; and so on *crecendo*, until it gets nearly to boiling point. In the meanwhile, in the intervals of the ducking, but not until you have been thoroughly saturated with water, the *chelavek* (*garçon*) who has taken you in hand has laid you down on a bench, like a stuck pig about to be scraped, and, with a handful of matting impregnated with soap, has rubbed you all over from head to foot, carefully, scrutinizingly, without neglecting a crevice or a corner, even to the innermost recesses of the ears. I said from head to foot; and, in fact, the *chelavek* will so lather, and rub, and scratch your head, that you can scarcely help laughing at the absurdity of such a proceeding, and will so tickle the soles of your feet that you with difficulty avoid kicking out at him.



And now the blood begins to flow (but only internally—there are no wounds), and you feel confidence in your *chelavek*, who, without leaving you any time for repose on your bench, motions to you to get up that he may throw water at you again. He gives it you hot and hot, over the head, into the eyes, down the back, and then asks you whether you have had enough, or whether you have not had enough, and would like something hotter? You reply at random, “*niet*” (no) or “*da*” (yes), without knowing exactly what the fellow means; or you leave him to himself, in which case he will probably treat you to a bucket at something over 100° Fahrenheit, and lead you to the inner room, if he has not already conducted you there, and then to a hotter one still: and, finally, if you will let him, to an innermost of all, where you will observe a flight of steps leading to a platform near the ceiling.

If you seem to take kindly to the scrubbing and scalding, the *chelavek* will propose that you should go upstairs to the fiery furnace; but this is an offer more frequently made than accepted—at least, by novices. The pavement and walls of all the bathing-rooms are heated; and in the last of the suite the heat is so great, that, without preparation, and without the exposure of the skin to the atmosphere, and the perspiration caused by the washing and rubbing, it would be impossible to bear it. Whether the *inferno* at the top of the staircase is rendered still hotter by the immediate



vicinity of a stove in the wall, or whether the excessive warmth of the temperature can be accounted for solely by the rising of the hot air and the vapour which hangs in clouds from the ceiling, one thing is certain—that to lie on that platform is, as far as one can imagine the situation, like lying in an oven. I tried it, and in a few seconds felt that I was roasting,—or, at all events, stewing. The ordinary temperature on the platform (I quote from a good authority) is 126° Fahrenheit—a heat which suffices to melt sealing-wax. It is true that it also melts human beings; that is to say, it makes them perspire most profusely. But it does not make their blood simmer, or cause them to break the smallest blood-vessel. On the contrary, it does good. Thus the Russian bath, taken thoroughly, is said to cure rheumatism, several forms of neuralgia, and a variety of other acute diseases.

But the reader must not be left on the platform, on descending from which he will be received by the *chelavek* with a salute of several pails, descending from hot to cold, but not terminating, as some will have it, with iced water. Neither is the bather—or rather the bathed one—expected at the conclusion of his ordeal to cool his precious body in snow. These pretty contrasts have been invented, though we believe that it is quite true that in summer—when only it would be possible—the peasants, after their ordinary bath, sometimes take a swim in the nearest river.



The Russian bath which opens every pore in the skin, produces a delightful glow, accompanied, however, by a certain amount of languor. On the whole, it is wonderfully refreshing, and after any great fatigue is quite revivifying. It is impossible not to recognise a person who has just returned from the bath. It gives a colour to the palest, and is like a fountain of youth to those who are no longer young. But this is only for a few hours afterwards. The next day the pale are paler than ever, and those who ordinarily have a colour have lost some of it. The skin has contracted; and the pinched-up, colourless, tanned sort of look, which is observable in many Russians, both among the women and the men, is doubtless to be attributed as much to the baths as to the variations of climate and to the severity of the winter.

If we return once more to the bath-room, where the *chelavek* will have offered us some sort of robe to wrap ourselves in, and a long pipe to smoke, we must not forget that when the ordinary payment is made to the proprietor something is due to the *chelavek* himself; "*na chai*," to use his own expression. Hearing those words for the first time in a bath-room the evening of my arrival in Moscow, I naturally did not understand them in the least; and when the attendant, by way of making his meaning clearer, held a tea-cup before my astonished eyes, I came to the conclusion that he was anxious I should have some tea, and signified my will-



ingness in that respect. But my Aquarius wanted "tea-money," in which form all gratuities to servants in Russia are given.

From water to fire the transition is abrupt. But fire breaks out when it is least expected, and we must say a few words about the Russian fire service. In Moscow (and the same system is observed in St. Petersburg and all the large cities), there are twelve police "quarters," each of which is superintended, and its inhabitants plundered whenever they require, or perhaps do not require, his services, by a *qvartalny*, otherwise known as a major of police. Each "quarter" has a station, from the centre of which rises a lofty watchtower, so conspicuous that its summit—a circular platform—can be seen from every part of the town. One or more members of the police are always stationed on these platforms, and if there is any disturbance in the streets they will perhaps call attention to it; but their chief duty is to watch for fires. As soon as a fire breaks out the first watchman who discovers it hoists on a flag-staff, fixed in the tower for that purpose, a certain combination of balls, indicating the "quarter" in which the conflagration has been observed. The signal is repeated by all the other watchmen; and as a complete system of fire-signals is exhibited outside every police-station, all Moscow knows before long what houses are likely to be in danger. The balls remain on the flag-staff until the flames have been extinguished,



and at night, instead of the balls, the signal is composed of coloured lamps. The system would be admirable if it were well followed up, and if the fire-brigades were nearly as useful as they are active and courageous. At the first news of fire, the General-Governor, or the Emperor, if he happen to be in Moscow, hastens to the spot, where the nearest firemen, who have excellent horses and gallop along the streets at a furious pace, have doubtless already arrived. A Russian fire-train with its outriders, and its artillery-like equipages, each drawn by a *troika*,\* is a picturesque sight, and has an imposing and even a business-like look, when the men are hurrying to a fire, and you do not precisely know what they are going to do when they get there, nor what they are carrying with them. Every one seems to know what he is about, and no time is lost. But when they have reached the scene of action, and have “unlimbered” (so to say), we find that they are so many men in armour, who have brought with them a few casks of water and some squirts. The squirts (for they are nothing more) would doubtless have frightened M. de Pourceaugnac into fits; but for extinguishing fires they are of less avail even than our ancient parish engines. In one of the by-streets of Moscow,

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\* Three horses harnessed abreast.



where the houses are nearly all built of wood, roofed in with sheet-iron, I watched from the top of a neighbouring building several companies of firemen endeavouring to extinguish a fire, which had already consumed one dwelling, and threatened to spread much further than "next door," for the wind was blowing live embers in all directions. The firemen, armed with their never-failing hatchets, (with which, if necessary, they will cut a house to pieces to save the adjacent ones), got on to the roof of one of the burning houses, rolled up the sheet-iron like a sheet of paper, and in exact proportion as they uncovered the building exposed themselves to the flames beneath, which rose as they were fed by the external air. But other firemen came up, mounted their ladders, and crowded round the open roof in such numbers, and squirted so vigorously, and threw so many buckets of water on to the flames, that they actually *did* put them out. Only, if they had had serviceable engines, they would have done the work with less risk, greater certainty, and in half the time.

The neighbours assuredly had not much faith in the speedy extinction of the fire, for, at a distance of several houses, many of them had already begun to place their valuables in carts which stood at the safe end of the street.

It was interesting to see what these valuables were. The first thing saved seemed to be the holy images,



and next to them the fur-cloaks, which, when the fur is costly and the family is poor, are handed down from generation to generation.

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## CHAPTER X.

## EATING AND DRINKING.

“TELL me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are,” says the facetious author of the *Physiologie du Gout*. I will tell my readers what the Russians eat ; and if among them there should happen to be some Brillat Savarin—why, perhaps he will be able to do what no one else has done, and tell us what they are.

In the old times the Russians lived with great simplicity, and the luxurious existence for which the Russian nobles were celebrated in the eighteenth century does not appear to have been known until after the changes introduced by Peter the Great. Prince Shcherbatoff, a strange specimen of a Russian Conservative, who looks upon all the reforms of Peter as unmitigated evils, devotes several pages, in a book



published during Catherine's reign to an account of the daily life of the old Tzars. It appears to me that those sovereigns lived as luxuriously as the state of the culinary art would permit; but the Prince tells us that their table, though supplied with patriarchal abundance, was at the same time distinguished by patriarchal simplicity. He is not quite sure, he tells us, that the old Tzars did not eat off silver sometimes; but he is quite certain that in all the Moscow Treasury (in the Kremlin) there is not one respectable silver dinner-service. He might have added, however, that the Moscow Treasury contains an abundance of plates, dishes, and spoons of gold. They are rudely fashioned, it is true, and, in fact, are made after the model of the wooden platters and spoons of the peasantry, of which the form has not varied for centuries; but they are not the less costly for that. The Prince also praises the simplicity of the Tzarish table. He admits that the Court ate beef, mutton, pork, turkeys, ducks, Russian fowls, game, and pigs, with the addition of a quantity of pastry; but adds, that the latter was not always made of the best flour. Capons and milk-fed calves had never been heard of; and the greatest culinary luxury of the period was a piece of roast meat, or ham, garnished with gold paper. Neither capers nor olives, nor any of the other incentives to eating were known, but the Russians *did* know and partake of salted cucumbers, salted plums, and, on great occasions, the



jelly of meat, accompanied by salted lemons. As for fish, they scarcely ever tasted it. The merchants had very few "preserve-ponds," and the art of bringing fish alive from distant parts, was not yet known. When the Emperor went to Moscow, he usually contented himself with such fish as could be caught in the Moscow river; but there were also artificial ponds in the neighbourhood of the holy city, which were laid under contribution in times of scarcity: and in winter salted and frozen fish were sent to the Tzar from all parts. The dessert was also of the most simple character. It consisted of raisins, currants, figs, prunes, and *pastilla*;\* or, in the summer, of apples, pears, *peas, beans, and cucumbers*. The Prince is of opinion that melons and water-melons were seldom heard of, except those (the finest of all, by the way) that were sent to Moscow from Astrakhan. In the matter of drink, the Russian Tzars were not at all particular. In addition to *kvass kislá shchee*, beer, *votka*, and different kinds of mead, they took nothing except the ordinary red wine, and "Rhine Wine"—a generic term, in which were included not only the wines of Germany, but also those of France, Portugal, and the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, Prince Shcherbatoff admits that, on grand occasions, the Russian Emperor made

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\* A composition of fruit and honey, corresponding (according to Dr. Guthrie) to the *pastillum* of the Romans.



as much display as possible; and M. Gerebtzoff, the author of an interesting work on "Civilization in Russia," tells us that the ordinary dinner of the ancient Tzars consisted of sixty or seventy different dishes, which they contented themselves with tasting, but which etiquette required them to have on the table. When the Earl of Carlisle dined with the Tzar five hundred dishes were served. At that period the Russian cooks (according to Gerebtzoff) distinguished themselves by their ingenuity in giving everything they prepared the form of something else. Thus fish were served up in the shape of lions or peacocks, or of hens and chickens; and the only kind that were allowed to appear as nature had made them were those of enormous size. Tanner, in his "Travels in Russia," written in the sixteenth century, says that he was present at a dinner where half a fish was brought in which it was as much as three men could do to carry. But it was especially in the preparation of the dessert that the Russian cooks exhibited their sculptural talents. Thus they made colossal figures of animals and models of towns in sugar; and we read that on the occasion of Peter the Great's birth the Tzar Alexis gave a dinner, of which the dessert included the following pieces of confectionary:—1. A salver in sugar, with the arms of Moscow; 2. A salver in cinnamon sugar; 3. An enormous head in sugar, weighing a hundred pounds; 4. A large eagle moulded in white sugar, with



the Imperial arms, weighing sixty pounds ; 5. Another eagle, similar in form, but made of red sugar ; 6. A swan in white sugar, weighing eighty pounds ; 7. A duck in white sugar, weighing twenty pounds ; 8. A parrot in sugar, weighing twenty pounds ; 9. A dove in sugar, weighing eight pounds ; 10. The Kremlin in sugar, with men on horseback and pedestrians ; 11. A large tower with an eagle, and another like it but not so large ; 12. A fortified town with cannons ; 13. Two trumpets in cinnamon sugar, one white and the other red. There were also pyramids of cakes, belfries of sugar-candy, forty dishes of human faces in sugar, thirty dishes of sugar-candy representing various vegetables, ten dishes of spiced sugar, a hundred and fifty dishes of dried and preserved fruit, melons, water-melons, &c. Gingerbread, which at present enjoys no better reputation in Russia than in England, was at that time in great favour. It is probably the most ancient species of confectionery known in the country. The Russians, before their conversion to Christianity, used to make offerings of gingerbread to their pagan deities ; and at all times they seem to have been in the habit of moulding it into the forms of animals and edifices. There can be no doubt as to the truth of Prince Shcherbatoff's assertion, that before the time of Peter luxury was comparatively unknown in Russia ; for it must be remembered that we have hitherto been speaking of the Tzar's table alone. The boyards are



said to have lived with extreme simplicity ; and it was not until Peter the Great introduced Western manners, and enforced the presence of his nobles at the Court, that they acquired those disastrous habits of expenditure for which they were so long notorious, and which seem to have led to that great misery of serfdom—the grinding down of serfs through stewards by absentee proprietors. In Catherine’s reign Coxe visited Russia, and was surprised at the magnificence with which the nobles lived. In spite of all the changes that have taken place since that time, the best account I have ever read of a Russian dinner, such as I remember it only the other day, is the one given by the Archdeacon in his still-valuable volumes. In the first place, we are told that “the tables were served with great profusion and taste,” and the English traveller found, that though the Russians had adopted the delicacies of French cookery, they “neither affected to despise their native dishes, nor squeamishly rejected the solid joints which characterized our repasts.” The plainest as well as the choicest viands had been collected from the most distant quarters, and at the same time were to be seen sterlet from the Volga, veal from Archangel, mutton from Astrakhan, beef from the Ukraine, and pheasants from Hungary and Bohemia. The common wines were claret, burgundy, and champagne ; “and,” says Archdeacon Coxe, “I never tasted English beer and porter in greater perfection and abundance.” Before



dinner—as in the present day—a small table was spread in the corner of the room, covered with plates of caviare, dried and pickled herrings, smoked ham and tongue, bread, butter, and cheese, together with bottles of different *liqueurs*; and few of the company of either sex omitted the prelude to the main entertainment. “This practice,” says the observant and facetious traveller, “has induced many travellers to relate that the Russians swallow bowls of brandy before dinner;” an absurdity which subsequent travellers have repeated, and which had great success with “the general reader” during the Crimean war. The Marquis de Custine, who seems to have aimed at originality in his errors, says, in his voluminous and untruthful account of his celebrated six-weeks’ tour, that many persons dine at the side-table before the real dinner commences. The fact, however, is, that the pieces of caviare, salted fish, cheese, &c., are about half the size of a die, and nobody takes more than one; indeed, in the present day, ladies take none at all: nor is the *zakouska* (as the preliminary entertainment is called) usually served at small family dinners. “What are the usages of the vulgar,” continues Archdeacon Coxe, “in this particular (that of drinking before dinner), I cannot determine; but among the nobility I never observed the least violation of the most extreme sobriety; and this custom of taking *liqueur* before dinner, considering the extreme smallness of the glasses used



on the occasion, is a very innocent refreshment, and will not convey the faintest idea of excess. Indeed, the Russians in no other wise differ from the French in this instance, than that they taste a glass of *liqueur* before their repast, while the latter defer it till after dinner."

Dr. Matthew Guthrie, physician to the Empress Catherine, in his interesting and learned dissertation on Russian antiquities, aims at showing that the Russians are, not descended from the Greeks, but of the same origin with that nation; and this he attempts to prove by establishing the identity of certain Russian customs with those of the ancient Hellenes, or of the Romans, as borrowed from them. He shows that the musical instruments are the same; that there is a wonderful similarity as to construction between the two languages; that many remarkable superstitions and semi-religious practices (as, for instance, at marriage festivals), which belong to Russia, belonged also to Greece; that the candles or torches of pine-wood found in the peasants' huts were used by the Greeks, and also the Russian stove or *peitchka* (λαμπτήρ). The knout corresponds with the *tumpanismos* and *taurea* of the ancients; the *shchott*, or calculating machine, still used by all the Russian merchants and peasants, is the Latin *abacus*; the *croupa*, or meal given to the Russian soldiers when they are on a campaign, and which they make into cakes and into soup, is the Greek *αλφιτον*;



the peculiar Russian soup called *batvinia* is the *μυττωτον* or black broth of the Spartans; *kvass*, the national drink, is the *posea* or *sera* of the Romans; the Russian sweetmeat *pastilla* is the Latin *pastillum*; the *bokall*, or *koub* (corresponding to our "loving cup"), is the ancient *amystis*; and the custom of sending it round the table is the classical *propinatio*; lastly, to end where I perhaps should have begun, the *zakouska* is the *προδεπνον* of the Greeks, and the *antecœnium* or *gustatio* of the Romans. "In that of the ancients," says Guthrie, "beetroot, cheese, and oysters were served: in the Russian *gustatio* the same things are served with the exception of the oysters, which are replaced by salt fish and a glass of liqueur, which the climate renders more necessary in the North than in Greece or at Rome." With regard to this alleged necessity to drink spirits in the North some doubts may be entertained, as the Russians in travelling, when they are exposed to the greatest amount of cold, generally take nothing but tea; and I know that many of the Russian doctors consider the *zakouska* unhealthy, and advise its discontinuance. Without going back to Greece or Rome, it will occur to some of my readers that the dram before dinner is not unknown in England, and that in the same way *vermuth* and *absinthe* are taken in various parts of the Continent.

The essential point in the service of the Russian dinner is—as is now generally known throughout Europe



—that the dishes should be handed round instead of being placed on the table, which is covered throughout the meal with flowers, fruit, and the whole of the dessert. One advantage of this plan is, that it makes the dinner-table look well; another, that it renders the service more rapid, and saves much trouble to the host. The dishes are brought in one by one; or two at a time, and of the same kind, if a large number are dining. The ordinary wines are on the table, and nothing has to be changed except the plates. At the end of dinner, as the cloth is not removed, the dessert is ready served; and this has always been one of the great glories of a Russian banquet.

To return to Archdeacon Coxe:—"I was particularly struck," says that traveller, "with the quantity and quality of the fruit which made its appearance in the dessert. Pines, peaches, apricots, grapes, pears, and cherries, none of which can in this country be obtained without the assistance of hot-houses,\* were served," he tells us, "in the greatest profusion. There was a delicious species of small melon, which had been sent by land-carriage from Astrakhan to Moscow—a distance of a thousand miles. These melons," he adds, "sometimes cost five pounds apiece, and at other times

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\* That is to say, not in the winter. In the summer, pears and cherries abound in Moscow, and every kind of fruit ripens in the south.



may be purchased in the markets of Moscow for less than half-a-crown apiece." One "instance of elegance" which distinguished the dessert, and which appears to have made an impression on the Archdeacon, is then mentioned. "At the upper and lower ends of the table were placed two china vases, containing cherry-trees in full leaf, and fruit hanging on the boughs which was gathered by the company." This cherry-tree is also a favourite, and certainly a very agreeable ornament, in the present day. At the conclusion of the dessert coffee is served as in France and England. Men and women leave the table together, and after dinner no wine is taken. Later in the evening tea is brought in, with biscuits, cakes, and preserved fruit.

The reception-rooms in Russian houses are all *en suite*; and instead of doors you pass from room to room through arches hung with curtains. The number of the apartments in most of the houses I remember varied from three to six or seven; but in the clubs and in large mansions there are more. Grace before or after dinner is never said under any circumstances; but all the guests make the sign of the cross before sitting down to table, usually looking at the same time towards the eastern corner of the room, where the holy image hangs. This ceremony is never omitted in families, though in the early part of the century, when the Gallomania was at its height, it is said to have



been much neglected. In club dinners, when men are dining alone, it will be easily believed that the same importance is not attached to it; but the custom may be described as almost universal among the rich, and quite universal among the poor. Indeed, a peasant or a workman would not on any account eat without first making the sign of the cross. In Russia, with its "patriarchal" society (as the Russians are fond of saying), it is usual to thank the lady of the house, either by word or gesture, after dining at her table; and those who are sufficiently intimate kiss her hand.

We now come to the composition of the Russian dinners; and here I must repeat with Archdeacon Coxe, that although the Russians have adopted many of the delicacies of French cookery, they "neither affect to despise their native dishes nor squeamishly reject the solid joints which characterise our own repasts." I was astonished, at one Russian dinner, which I was assured was thoroughly national in style, to meet with the homely roast leg of mutton and baked potatoes of my native land. Like the English, the Russians take potatoes with nearly every dish—either plain boiled, fried, or with parsley and butter over them. Plum-pudding, too, and boiled rice-pudding with currants in it, and with melted butter, are known in Russia—at all events in Moscow and St. Petersburg; and goose is not considered complete without applesauce. As in France, every dinner begins with soup:



but this custom has not been borrowed from the French. It seems to date from time immemorial, for all the Russian peasants, a thoroughly stationary class, take their soup daily. The Russians are very successful with some kind of pickles, such as salted cucumbers and mushrooms; and they excel in salads, composed not only of lettuce, endive, and beetroot, but also of cherries, grapes, and other fruits, preserved in vinegar. The fruit is always placed at the top, and has a very picturesque effect in the midst of the green leaves. Altogether it may be said that the Russian *cuisine* is founded on a system of eclecticism, with a large number of national dishes for its base. Of course in some Russian houses, as in some English ones, the cooking is nearly all in the French style; but even then there are always a few dishes on the table that might easily be recognised as belonging to the country. We need scarcely remark, that only very rich persons dine every day in the sumptuous style described by Archdeacon Coxe, though the rule as to service may be said to be general—one dish at a time, and nothing on the table but flowers and the dessert. In the winter, when it is difficult and expensive to get dessert, those who are rich send for it where it *can* be obtained—perhaps to their own hot-houses; and those who are not rich, as in other countries, go without. At the *traktirs*, or *restaurants*, the usual dinner supplied for three-quarters of a rouble consists of soup, with



a pie of mince-meat, or minced vegetables, an *entrée*, roast meat, and some kind of sweet. That, too, may be considered the kind of dinner which persons of moderate means have every day at home. Rich proprietors, who keep a head-cook, a roaster, a pastry-cook, and two or three assistant-cooks, would perhaps despise so moderate a repast; but from a little manual of cookery which a friend has been kind enough to send me from Russia, it would appear that the generality of persons do not have more than four dishes at each meal.

This cookery-book is entitled “Forty-two Dinners” (thirty for ordinary days and twelve for fast days), and bears the following not very promising epigraph in the French language:—“We must not consider what we eat, but with whom we eat.” Nevertheless, the work has a good reputation, and its contents are certainly arranged on an excellent plan. Instead of the usual confused list of soups, hashes, and stews, the author publishes so many prospectuses of complete dinners, which are printed like the programmes in the newspaper notices of the Philharmonic and other important concerts—but with this difference, that the musical accounts are analytic, and occasionally imperfect, whereas the culinary ones are synthetic, and thoroughly complete. Each dinner consists of four dishes, inclusive of soup and exclusive of dessert; and each dish is marked *a*, *b*, *c*, or *d*, according to its place in



the dinatorial sequence. Beneath each programme are separate directions for the preparations of dishes *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, and each of the forty-two dinners differs from all the others in every item, not even the same soup occurring twice throughout the work. The author evidently belongs to the school of Brillat Savarin in this respect—that he does not believe in the general capacity of mankind to arrange a dinner. He issues his bills of fare like so many imperial *oukazes*. He has spoken. What he has written he has written. You must not ask him why this dish must necessarily follow that one. He so wills it: *sit pro ratione voluntas*. There is not even an index to the work, so convinced is the author of the necessity of not making the slightest change in his arrangements—as, for instance, by substituting one soup or one kind of fish for another in a dinner. He has told us with true Russian irony that it is not necessary to consider what we eat, but with whom we eat; in other words, if we are going to dine with him, we must accept what he chooses to set down before us. I will select from this learned and authoritative work four dinners, which I have chosen principally because each of them commences with a thoroughly-national and decidedly-peculiar soup:—

#### SECOND DINNER.

- a*. Green borsch with beef and eggs.
- b*. Salt beef with sour cream and horse-radish.



*c.* Cutlets of mincemeat with pickles (*pickuli*).

*d.* Almond rings.

(*a.*) "Boil separately a piece of beef and some greens, either spinach, sorrel, or the leaves of beet-root. Rub the greens through a sieve, and put them into the beef-broth, which must also previously have been passed through a sieve. Add pepper and salt. Boil, and let simmer. Then boil some eggs hard, cut them into pieces, and put them into the *borsch*."

In *b* the horse-radish and sour cream are made into a sauce, and poured over the beef, which is cut in slices. The mincemeat cutlets (*c*) are made out of beef or pork chopped very fine, and mixed with bread-crumbs, egg, and spice. Before frying, a small bone is usually stuck into the "cutlet" by the ingenious cook, who is, however, at liberty to give any shape he pleases to the composition. The almond rings (*d*) are made of almonds, white of egg, and sugar.

#### FOURTH DINNER.

*a.* Shchee.

*b.* Croquettes with *purée* of beetroot.

*c.* Beef in hussar style, served with salad of baked beetroot.

*d.* Biscuits.

*Shchee* (*a*) is made out of beef, cabbage, parsley, carrots, salt and "English pepper;" and is the most thoroughly national of all the Russian soups. Peasants,



soldiers, merchants, and nobles eat this soup. Indeed, the peasant seldom takes any other, though there is frequently this important difference between his *shchee* and that of his betters: in the former, the important item of beef is omitted. However, at the Moscow "fabrics," of which I visited about a dozen, the daily food of the workmen was very good, consisting of *shchee* with beef in it, black bread and *casha* (the meal of buck-wheat) moistened with oil. I may here remark, that black bread is eaten by all classes, particularly with the *shchee*: even in the best houses, white and black, or white and brown, bread are put together on the table. Of the "croquettes" (*b*) I need say nothing. Beef is arranged in the hussar style (*c*), by being stuffed with onions and fried in butter, vinegar being poured over it during the operation of frying. The "biscuits" (*d*) are made of white flour, with sugar, white of egg and cream, put into paper boxes and baked. These biscuits are served with cream over them, except when they are intended to be eaten with wine.

#### TWENTY-SEVENTH DINNER

- a.* Batvinia.
- b.* Stuffed carrots with sauce.
- c.* Roast mutton with mushrooms.
- d.* Compôte or jelly of almonds,

I will here only speak of the *batvinia* (*a*) and the



stuffed carrots (*b*). The former, which it may be remembered, corresponds, according to Guthrie, to the black broth of the Spartans, is made of roast or boiled beef, cut up into small pieces, boiled beetroot, spring onions, and carraway seeds, *purée* of sorrel or spinach with eggs chopped up in it, and finally kvass. Another kind of *batvinia* which is eaten only in the summer, consists of fish, spring vegetables, beetroot, kvass, and ice. Kvass is the chief drink, as black bread is the most important article of food in Russia, and both serve a variety of purposes in the national cookery. Kvass is made from the flour of black bread and malt. It has a slight acid taste, is effervescent, and is found very refreshing by those whom it does not disgust. Few foreigners like it at the first trial, but Russians of all classes take it, and the peasants prefer it to anything else as a general drink. Though a fermented liquor, it contains scarcely any alcohol. It is weaker than weak table-beer, and will only keep for a few days unless placed in an ice cellar, of which there is one in every Russian house. Stuffed carrots (*b*) are carrots scooped out like popguns, loaded with mince meat, and stewed or fried.

The last *menu* I shall print is that of a fast-dinner. Here it is :—

#### THIRTY-THIRD DINNER.

*a. Oukha* of sterlet.



*b.* Fish cutlets with sauce (the water the fish has been boiled in, flour, salad oil\* and vinegar).

*c.* Fried perch.

*d.* Kissel (a sort of blanc-manger made from fine oat flower) with almond milk.

*Oukha* (*a*) is the most celebrated of the Russian fish-soups. The best kind is made from sterlet, a rich, oily, yellow-fleshed, but at the same time exceedingly delicate fish; in form something between an eel and a whiting. The sterlet is caught in the Volga, and will not live in the water of any other river. In winter it is sent frozen to all parts of the empire; but it is always expensive, and in summer, owing to the cost and trouble of transporting it in cans of Volga water, a very small sterlet will cost at Petersburg as much as ten or twelve roubles. M. Alexandre Dumas, in his highly interesting and for the most part truthful work, entitled "*Memoirs of a Maitre d'Armes, or Eighteen Months in St. Petersburg,*" gives to the sterlet a very much higher value than is usually assigned to it; but he at the same time makes the distance from St. Petersburg to the nearest point of the Volga a thousand miles, instead of about four hundred. One error explains the other.

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\* On fast-days (that is to say, *jours maigres*) neither butter nor cream can be used, and oil is substituted for them in cookery; yet, notwithstanding a very genial opinion in Europe to the contrary, the Russians on the whole eat less oil than the French.



The directions for making the *oukha* in the "Forty-two Dinners" are as follows: "Cut the sterlet into pieces, pour boiling water over it; add salt, spice, and some slices of lemon, and boil." The Russians make other soups out of little cray-fish (*écrevisses*), which may be classed with the French *potage à la bisque*.

The most ancient and popular drinks in Russia are hydromel or mead (called by the same name in Russian), beer, and the aforesaid kvass. Mead, the fine old Scandinavian drink, is mentioned as far back as the tenth century; and in a chronicle of Novgorod of the year 989 it is stated that "a great festival took place, at which a hundred and twenty thousand pounds of honey were consumed." Hydromel is flavoured with various kinds of spices and fermented with hops. Gerebtzoff states that beer is mentioned (under the name of *oloul*—the present word being *pivo*) in the "Book of Ranks," written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. But no drink is so ancient as kvass, which, according to the chronicle of Nestor, was in use among the Slavonians in the first century of our era. Among the laws of Yaroslaff there is an old edict determining the quantity of malt to be furnished for making kvass to workmen engaged in building a town.

The Russians learnt to drink wine from the Greeks, during their frequent intercourse with the Eastern empire, long before the Mongol invasion. During the Tartar domination there was less communication with



Constantinople and the consumption of wine decreased, but it became greater again during the period of the Tzars. In the beginning of the seventeenth century wine was supplied to ambassadors, but the Russians for the most part still preferred their native drinks. The cultivation of the vine was introduced at Astrakhan in 1613, and a German traveller named Strauss, who visited the city in 1675, found that it had been attended with great success ; so much so, that, without counting what was sold in the way of general trade, the province supplied to the Tzar alone every year two hundred tuns of wine, and fifty tuns of grape brandy. The wines of Greece were at the same time replaced by those of Hungary, which were in great demand when Peter came and introduced the vintage of France. This by many persons will be considered not the least of his reforms.

The Russians acquired the art of distilling from grain in the fourteenth century from the Genoese established in the Crimea, and seem to have lost no time in profiting by their knowledge. They soon began to invent infusions of fruit and berries, which under the name of "nalivka" have long been known to travellers, and which I for my part found excellent. "Raki," about the consumption of which by the Russian soldiers so much was written during the Crimean war, is a Turkish spirit, and is unknown in Russia. The Russian grain-spirit is called "*votka*." The best qua-



lities are more like the best whisky than anything else, only weaker; but it is of various degrees of excellence as of price. The new common *votka*, like other new spirits, is fiery; but when purified, and kept for some time, it is excellent and particularly mild. Travellers to Moscow who are curious on the subject of *votka* may visit a gigantic distillery in the neighbourhood, to which it is easy to gain admission, and where they can obtain information and samples in abundance. *Votka* is sometimes made in imitation of brandy, and there are also sweet and bitter *votkas*; and, indeed, *votka* of all flavours. But the British spirit which the ordinary *votka* chiefly resembles is whisky. There is one curious custom connected with drinking in Russia which, as far as I am aware, has never been noticed. The Russians drink first and eat afterwards, and never drink without eating. If wine and biscuits are placed on the table, every one takes a glass of wine first, and then a biscuit; and at the *zakouska* before dinner, those who take the customary glass of *votka* take an atom of caviare or cheese after it, but not before. It may also be remarked that, as a general rule, the Russians, like the Orientals, drink only at the beginning of a repast.

A hospitable Englishman entertaining a Russian, on seeing him eat after drinking, would press him to drink again, and having drunk a second time, the Russian would eat once more on his own account; which would



involve another invitation to drink on the part of the Englishman. As a hospitable Russian, on the other hand, entertaining an Englishman, would endeavour to prevail upon him to eat after drinking, and as it is the Englishman's habit to drink after eating, it is easy to see that too much attention on either side might lead to very unfortunate results.

A great deal is said about the enormous quantity of champagne consumed in Russia. Champagne, however, costs five roubles (from sixteen to seventeen shillings) a bottle—the duty alone amounting to one rouble a bottle—and is only drunk habitually by persons of considerable means. Nor does the champagne bottle go round so frequently at Russian as at English dinners. It is usually given, as in France, with the pastry and dessert, and no other wine is taken after it. The rich merchants are said to drink champagne very freely at their evening entertainments; but the only merchant at whose house I dined had, unfortunately, adopted Western manners, and gave nothing during the evening but tea. However, at festivals and celebrations of all kinds—whether of congratulation, of welcome, or of farewell—champagne is indispensable. What Alphonse Karr says of women and their toilette—that they regard every event in life as an occasion for a new dress—may certainly be paraphrased and applied to the Russians in connection with champagne. Besides the champagne which



is given as a matter of course at dinner-parties and balls, there must be champagne at birthdays, champagne at christenings, champagne at, or in honour of, betrothals, champagne in abundance at weddings, champagne at the arrival of a friend, and champagne at his departure. For those who cannot afford veritable champagne, Russian viniculture supplies an excellent imitation in the shape of "Donskoi" and "Crimskoi,"—the wines of the Don and of the Crimea. As "Donskoi" costs only a fifth of the price of real champagne, it will be understood that it is not seldom substituted for the genuine article, both by fraudulent wine-merchants and economic hosts. However, it is a true wine, and far superior to the fabrications of Ham-burgh, which, under the name of champagne, find their way all over the north of Europe. It has often been said that the Russians drink champagne merely because it is dear. But the fact is, they have a liking for all effervescing drinks, and naturally, therefore, for champagne, the best of all. Among the effervescing drinks peculiar to Russia, we may mention apple *kvass*, *kislya shchee*, and *voditsa*. *Kislya shchee* is made out of two sorts of malt, three sorts of flour, and dried apples; in apple *kvass* there are more apples and less malt and flour. *Voditsa* (a diminutive of *voda*, water), is made of syrup, water, and a little spirit. All these summer-drinks are bottled and kept in the ice-house. My information about Russian beverages is derived from



personal experience and observation, and also from a little Russian work published in Moscow in the year 1828, under the title of *The Ancient Russian Mistress, Housewife, and Cook; or, detailed Instructions as to the Preparation of genuine Ancient Russian Dishes and Drinks, together with Directions on Points connected with Housekeeping, and on Pickling and Preserving in the most ancient Russian Mode and Taste; arranged in convenient order.*

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## CHAPTER XI.

## TEA-HOUSES (TRAKTIRS) AND TEA.

A TRUE Russian *restaurant*, or *traktir* (probably from the French *traiteur*), is not to be found in St. Petersburg, whose *cafés* and *restaurants* are either German or French, or imitated from German or French models. One of the large Moscow traktirs is not only very much larger, but at least twelve times larger than an ordinary French *café*. The best of them is the Troitzkoi traktir, where the merchants meet to complete the bargains they have commenced on the Exchange—that is to say—in the street beneath, where all business is carried on, summer and winter, in the open air. St. Petersburg is more fortunate, and has a regular bourse, with a chapel attached to it. The merchants always enter this chapel before commencing their



regular afternoon's work ('Change is held at four o'clock in St. Petersburg), and remain for several minutes at their devotions, occasionally offering a candle to the Virgin or some saint. Now and then it must happen that a speculator for the rise and a speculator for the fall enter the chapel and commence their orisons at the same time. Probably they pray that they may not be tempted to cheat one another.

There is no special chapel for the Moscow merchants, nor is there one attached to the Troitzkoi traktir, which I am inclined to look upon after all as the real Moscow Exchange. But in each of the rooms, of which the entrances as usual are arched, and which together form an apparently interminable suite, the indispensable holy picture is to be seen ; and no Russian goes in or out without making the sign of the cross. No Russian, to whatever class he may belong, remains for a moment with his hat on in any inhabited place ; whether out of compliment to those who inhabit it, or from respect to the holy pictures, or from mixed reasons. The waiters, of whom there are said to be a hundred and fifty at the Troitzkoi traktir, are all dressed in white, and it is facetiously asserted that they are forbidden to sit down during the day for fear of disturbing the harmony and destroying the purity of their spotless linen. The service is excellent. The waiters watch and divine the wishes of the guests, instead of the guests having to watch, seek, and sometimes scream



for the waiters, as is too often the case in England. Here the attendants do everything for the visitor ; cut up his *pirog* (meat or fish patty), so that he may eat it with his fork ; pour out his tea, fill his chibouk, and even bring it to him ready lighted. The reader perceives that there is a certain Oriental style about the Russian traktirs. The great article of consumption in them is tea. Every one orders tea, either by itself, or to follow the dinner ; and the majority of those who come into the place take nothing else. You can have a tumbler of tea or a pot of tea ; but in ordering it you do not ask for tea at all, but for so many portions of sugar. The origin of this curious custom it is scarcely worth while to consider ; but it apparently dates from the last European war, when, during the general blockade, the price of sugar in Russia rose to about four shillings a pound.

All sorts of stories have been told about the quantity of tea consumed by Russian merchants, nor do I look upon any of them as exaggerated. From twelve to twenty cups are thought nothing of. I have seen two merchants enter a traktir, order so many portions of sugar, and drink cup after cup of tea, until the tea-urn before them was empty ; yet the ordinary tea-urn of the traktir holds at least a gallon, or a gallon and a half.

One of the most curious traktirs in Moscow is that of the "Old Religionists" a Russian sect of whom I



need only say here that they derive their name from their preference of the ancient version of the Scriptures used in Russia up to the time of Nikon, to the more correct translation introduced by that prelate in the sixteenth century. They also attach peculiar sanctity to the old ecclesiastical pictures, which they say were painted by devout artists, instead of being manufactured, like the modern ones, by profane artisans in the midst of smoking and drinking. They are intense patriots, the most Slavonian of all Slavonians, and haters of Western manners, which they regard as synonymous with luxury and vice. They are also great quoters and perverters of scriptural texts. Thus, it is said that their abstinence from tobacco-smoking is founded upon the well-known passage, which teaches that "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man;" and that they refuse to shave their beards, because "man is made in the image of God."

The Old Religionists associate as much as possible among themselves, and, as already mentioned, have a *traktir* of their own; to which, however, any one is admitted. The waiters in this establishment, contrary to the usual custom in *traktirs*, are attired in dark caftans, and smoking is not, under any circumstances, allowed. As none but "Old Religionists" would care about visiting a *traktir* where it is impossible to



smoke, the place is left entirely to that eccentric body, and caftans and beards are to be seen at every table.

The rooms are entered through curtained arches, as at other traktirs. There is, of course, an abundance of holy pictures, most of which are of great antiquity, though differing outwardly in no respect but that of age from the "images" of the present day. On the wall opposite the principal entrance are two pictures of the same size, and hung on the same line. One of these represents the Holy Virgin, the other the Emperor. The traktir of the Old Religionists is further remarkable for the excellence of its tea and of its cooking generally. Its most celebrated product is *blinni*, a species of pancake eaten during Lent with caviare.

A notorious traktir of another kind is "the little Poushkin traktir" in the Clothes' Market, or "Elbow Market," as it is also called, from the elbowing of the crowd, not to repeat another of its appellations derived from entomology which is still more significant. The little Poushkin traktir is not named after Poushkin the great poet, but after Poushkin the proprietor of the Moskovski traktir, whose establishment it resembles about as much as the Clothes' Market resembles the Palace in the Kremlin. It is as if some vendor of trotters and sheep's heads in St. Giles's were to call his shop "Claridge's" or "Long's." The prices of the *soi-disant* Poushkin are, I believe, the lowest in



the whole world. He reckons in copper money,\* and to an enterprising customer who is ready to take a complete dinner, will supply two copeiks' worth of soup, one of bread, four of meat, two of kasha, and one of kvass, constituting altogether a very remarkable meal for ten copeiks copper, or about five farthings of our own currency.

At a few of the traktirs there are billiard-tables (for the Russian game). At others there are enormous self-playing organs, some of which have cost the proprietor as much as 25,000 roubles. There are traktirs, too, in "Skin-them-alive Street" (Jivodyorskaia Oulitza), frequented by the gipsies, of which I shall have occasion to speak in a chapter devoted specially to the "Tsigani" of Moscow.

The Tartars (or, more correctly, Tatars) have also a traktir of their own ; at least there is a traktir in the "Tatarskaia Oulitza," or "Tartar Street," which is always full of them, though the place is kept by a Russian, and every one is admitted. I took some refreshment there once, and so far as I could judge,

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\* Formerly there were two kinds of money current in Russia—silver roubles and copeiks, and assignation roubles and copeiks ; but the latter were always called by the people—as if in opposition to silver money—"copper money." The peasants still reckon in copper money, though for the last quarter of a century silver money and notes changeable at sight for the exact amount they represent have alone been in circulation. The silver rouble, when the assignation money was called in, was worth three assignation roubles and a half.



horse-flesh formed no part of the repast; nor could I ascertain that any specially Tartar dishes were ever prepared there. Seen from the outside, the "Tartars' traktir," as it is called, is a low, dirty-looking building; but the interior is remarkably clean, in spite of the dingy, faded appearance of the tawdry scarlet curtains with which the windows and arches are hung, and the bareness of the walls, which are so far guiltless of paint or plaster, that in many places the very bricks are visible. From twelve to twenty Tartars were sitting about the room in groups, attired in gaudy dressing-gowns, and brilliantly-ribbed skull-caps, and smoking long chibouks. All were drinking tea, and the proprietor said they rarely if ever ordered anything else. Whether in towns or in villages they live quite by themselves, but always on good terms with the Russians, who address them familiarly as "Prince." Whether this title is given ironically or not I cannot tell, but the Tartars accept it very gravely, and it is said that every one of them claims to be of the best possible descent. These Tartars belong to the same race as the Turks, and have nothing of the Mongol type of countenance. How far the Mongol invaders mixed with the Tartar and Turkish tribes whom they encountered and subjected in their impetuous course, it is impossible to say; but none of the Russian Tartars that I ever saw had the high cheek-bones, flat nose, and slanting eyes, by which the Mongol face is characterized. A few



of the Little Russians appear to have Mongol blood in their veins, which may have come to them through hybrid Cossacks settled in the land. But the Russian Tartars have as little of it as the great bulk of the Russian population.

The Moscow Tartars trade in the merchandize sent by their compatriots from Kazan and Astrakhan, Bokhara, and Khiva; and have no dealings with the Persians who import shawls, nor with the Armenians who engage in commerce of every kind. "They eat horse-flesh," says a native writer "perform their ablutions, go to the mosque, and shut up their wives. They wear dressing-gowns, and go about in *telegas*, or on foot, with parcels of goods, which they endeavour to sell to the proprietor or lodgers of any house they may think fit to enter, and which they will penetrate at any risk. . . They must live very soberly, for none are ever seen drunk; and if by chance they give themselves up to the use of strong liquors, it is necessary for them to obtain an authorization, and to have each bottle labelled 'Balsam.' They live very retired and apart from the rest of the population; at all events I have lived thirty years in Moscow, without either myself or any of my friends having formed a regular acquaintance with any of them.\* They do business

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\* Nevertheless, I have known persons who, travelling in the country, have stopped at Tartar huts. They found the inmates very



in a sufficiently honest manner; endeavouring, in the first instance, to impose upon the purchaser, but finally selling their goods at moderate prices: for the rest, profiting like all other tradespeople, by every advantage which presents itself. They are of gentle disposition; at least they are never seen fighting or quarrelling. Their cemetery is at the back of that of the Monastery of the Don. Every summer the Tartars may be seen on the shores of the Ostankina lake (at about four versts from Moscow), where they perform regularly their ablutions."

I may add, that the Moscow Tartars seem to assume that every man they meet, especially if he be a foreigner, is in urgent want of a dressing-gown; and on the occasion of my visiting the traktir in the "Street of the Tartars," I had scarcely finished eating when I received a very pressing offer to supply me with some great bargains in the *robe-de-chambre* line. The dressing-gowns were at the Tartar's house opposite the traktir, and I accepted his invitation to accompany him there, "if only to look at them and admire their beauty." The houses are completely shut in by a high wall, which runs all down the street; and there is again a

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hospitable, and exceedingly clean. In the country the Tartars have generally their own villages, in each of which there is a mosque. There, as in the towns, they live quite apart from the Russians.



division in each house, one part being occupied by the women of the family, the other by the men. The little girls are allowed to run about the house as they please; but from the age of twelve or thirteen they are kept in the women's apartments. The Tartar women never go into the street without veiling their faces, and, as a rule, never attend any places of entertainment. My Tartar of the dressing-gowns, however, told me that he had occasionally taken his wife to public assemblies where no one knew her; but that he never took her to the houses of his friends, nor allowed them to see her when they visited him. He daringly maintained that men could talk very well without women and get on without them generally. Occasionally, however, the wives of Tartars of humble means do appear in public, and they may be sometimes seen returning from the bath, walking slowly along wrapped up in their dressing-gowns, with which they cover the whole of their face except the eyes.

At the end of Tatarskaia Oulitza is a mosque, to which, in acknowledgment of an absurd purchase I had made, my friend the Tartar consented to guide me, though he declared himself averse to entering the building in my company. It was Friday afternoon, and in half an hour the principal service of the Weekly Mahometan Festival was to begin. Accordingly I returned to the traktir, gave the Tartar some tea, and then went into the mosque by the entrance pointed out to



me. It is built of a clear white stone, like marble. Like other mosques, it is entirely without ornament or furniture of any kind, except one magnificent lamp dependent from the ceiling, and a strip of rich carpet, on which five dressing-gown sellers—their heads enveloped in turbans—were performing their devotions. Some of the Russian churches (especially those of the convents) have interiors almost as simple and impressive as that of this mosque. There are neither chairs nor benches nor pulpits to disturb the harmony of the architectural lines; but the glittering iconostasis and the pictures, with their tinsel and jewellery, spoil everything. I need scarcely remind the reader that it is Religion, not Art, which places these paintings in the Russian churches.

The Persians have also the free exercise of their religion; and the Armenians, as members of a Christian church, have the same privileges as the Roman Catholics and, in fact, are quite on an equality with the Greeks. The Jews, however, until lately, were not tolerated in Moscow, unless, being of German, French, or English origin, they wore the ordinary European costume. Jews from Judea, bearded and gaberdined, were allowed to enter the city if their business required it; but they were obliged to inhabit a house set apart for them in the Kitai gorod (Chinese town), and even then could only remain a certain number of days. Accordingly, Jews rarely appear in Moscow in their native Oriental



dress, which consists of a black caftan with a girdle of the same colour, breeches, and long boots. Circassians, and other natives of the Caucasus, are also to be seen in Moscow, especially on what is called the Exchange; which is, in fact, the pavement in front of that building, or rather the traktir opposite to it. I have said, that in this traktir the most important bargains are made over tea, which is really the great beverage of the country. "Tea," says M. Gerbtzoff, "has become, for every one, an habitual article of consumption, and replaces, advantageously for morality, brandy and beer; for on all occasions when a bargain has to be concluded, or when a companion has to be entertained, or on receiving or taking leave of a friend, tea is given instead of wine or brandy." Indeed, I not only observed that in the Moscow traktirs nearly every one drank tea, but that it was a favourite beverage with all classes on all occasions. The middle and upper classes take tea twice or three times a day,—always in the morning, and often twice in the evening. The *isvostchik*, who formerly had a reputation for drunkenness, which travellers of the present day continue to ascribe to him, appears to prefer tea to every other drink. Such, at least, was my experience; and his mode of asking for a *pour boire* seems to confirm it. Some years since travellers used to tell us of the *isvostchik* asking at the end of his drive for *votka* money ("na votkou"); at present the invariable re-



quest is for tea-money ("na tchai"). Even in roadside inns, where I have seen from twelve to twenty coachmen and postilions sitting down together, nothing but tea was being drunk. A well-known tourist has told us that every Russian peasant possesses a tea-urn or *samovar*; but this is not the case. The majority of the peasants are too poor to afford such a luxury as tea, except on rare occasions, but a tea-urn is one of the first objects that a peasant who has saved a little money buys; and it is true, that in some prosperous villages there is a samovar in every hut; and in all the post-houses and inns each visitor is supplied with a separate one.

The samovar, which, literally, means "self-boiler," is made of brass lined with tin, with a tube in the centre. In fact it resembles the English urn, except that in the centre-tube red-hot cinders are placed instead of the iron heater. Of course, the charcoal, or *braise*, has to be ignited in a back kitchen or court-yard; for in a room the carbonic acid proceeding from it would prove injurious. It has no advantage then, whatever, over the English urn, except that it can be heated with facility in the open air, with nothing but some charcoal, a few sticks of thin dry wood, and a lucifer; hence its value at pic-nics, where it is considered indispensable. In the woods of Sakolniki, in the gardens of Marina Roschia, and in the grounds adjoining the Petrovski Palace, all close to Moscow, large supplies



of samovars are kept at the tea-houses, and each visitor or party of visitors is supplied with one. Indeed, the quantity of tea consumed at these suburban retreats in the spring and summer is prodigious. In Russia there is no interval between winter and spring. As soon as the frost breaks up the grass sprouts, the trees blossom, and all nature is alive. In that country of extremes there is sometimes as much difference between April and May as there is in England between January and June. The summer is celebrated by various promenades to the country, which take place at Easter, on the 1st of May, Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday, and other occasions. The great majority of these promenades are of a festive nature, but some, like that which is made on the 19th of May to the monastery and cemetery of the Don, have a penitential or at least a mournful character. The samovar, however, is present even in the churchyard. I never joined in one of the funeral pilgrimages to the Donskoi convent; but in other cemeteries outside Moscow and St. Petersburg (intramural burial not being tolerated) I noticed that the custodians kept in their lodges a supply of samovars for the benefit of visitors. And, after all, what can be more appropriate than an urn in a cemetery?

Between St. Petersburg and Kovno or Tauroggen, there are upwards of fifty "stations," at each of which tea can be procured. Travellers whose route does not



lie along the government post-roads take samovars with them in their carriages ; and small samovars that can be packed into the narrowest compass are made for the use of officers starting on a campaign, and other persons likely to find themselves in places where it may be difficult to procure hot water. Small tea-caddies are also manufactured with a similar object. Each caddy contains one or more glasses ; for men among themselves usually drink their tea, not out of tea-cups, but out of tumblers. Not many years since it was the fashion to give cups to women and tumblers to men in the evening ; but the tumbler is gradually being banished, at least from the drawing-room.

The Russians never take milk in their tea ; they take either cream, or a slice of lemon or preserved fruit, or simply sugar without the addition of anything else. They hold that milk spoils tea, and they are right. Tea with lemon or preserves (forming a kind of tea-punch, well worthy the attention of tea-totallers) is only taken in the evening. Sometimes the men add rum. The superiority of the Russian overland tea to that which is received in the West of Europe from Canton has been often asserted, and sometimes denied. Oddly enough, M. Tegoborski, the well-known economist, denies persistently that the tea from Kiakhta is at all better than the Canton tea. He declares in his work on the productive forces of Russia that he has tasted flowery pekoe in London quite equal to the same de-



scription of tea (*tsvetochny*) sold in Moscow. Perhaps M. Tegoborski's taste was inferior to his literary talent; or rather—as in his chapter on tea he endeavours to prove that Russia would be benefited immensely by having her ports thrown open to vessels from Canton—his taste may have been influenced by his wishes.

Tea is now admitted at a heavy duty through the ports, and the standard of Russian tea has been somewhat lowered thereby. But I have no hesitation in saying that no such tea can be found in London as the best tea sold in Moscow. Sir John Davis, who had paid more attention to the tea question than M. Tegoborski, says, in his work on China, "It would be absurd to pretend that the long sea voyage in which the equator is twice crossed (and the water in which the ship crossed is often heated between eighty and ninety degrees) has no ill effect on tea cargoes. With an absolute and complete absence of all humidity, we know that heat has little or no decomposing effect; but such a state cannot be the ordinary characteristic of a ship's hold, as must be clear to all who have found the difficulty of preserving some articles from damage between this and India. Some of the Company's finest hyson teas were packed in double cases of wood, besides the canisters. Black tea is better able to contend with the chances of injury to which a cargo may be exposed than green. It has generally been subjected



in a much greater degree to the action of fire in drying, and has besides less delicacy of flavour than the other."

Sir John Davis goes on to observe, that there is no difficulty in accounting for the superior condition in which "green tea especially" is found in Russia, the region it traverses being generally dry as well as cold; thanks to which, none of the original qualities of the tea are lost by evaporation or otherwise. The most delicate kind, however, that comes to Russia is the *tsvetochny*, or flowery tea, to which the nearest equivalent to be obtained in the West of Europe is flowery pekoe. But the best specimens of the latter, either from the reasons mentioned by Sir John Davis, or from natural inferiority, are not to be compared to the finer specimens of the former. Probably, too, the enormous prices paid by the Russians for their tea have something to do with the question. There is but little sale in England for the very best qualities of tea: and it is doubtful whether China ever sends us her choicest produce at all. It is known that the blossoms are plucked from the trees several times in the course of the season. The first gathering gives the rarest quality of *tsvetochny*; the second gives the ordinary *tsvetochny*; at last, instead of *tsvetochny*, common tea is obtained. The earliest gatherings of tea-blossoms or flowers are sent to Russia, and it is by no means certain that any are exported to England.



Several of the St. Petersburg journals suggested, in connection with the new tariff, that the monopoly of tea so long enjoyed by the caravan trade should be at length abolished, and that Canton or other tea should be admitted by sea. These suggestions were at last adopted, and the Russians have now no longer to pay about two roubles a pound for ordinary congou.

The advocates for admitting tea through the ports have always maintained that the superiority of some of the caravan tea over any that could be introduced by sea was so marked, that it would still command a sale at high prices from those rich amateurs who, in certain cases, will pay as much as thirty-five shillings a pound for particular growths. At present an excellent mixture of black tea and flowery pekoe is sold at ten shillings; and it is quite true that no such tea can be procured in any other country, except China itself. It is nevertheless highly probable that ninety-nine families out of a hundred will now prefer a somewhat inferior mixture at half the price; and in that case the Siberian trade, to protect which the Government is so careful, would indeed be injured. The maintenance of the caravan trade through Siberia, to the injury of all the tea-drinking inhabitants of Russia, to be rightly judged, must be viewed in connection with the projected railways to the East; and as long as any intention of forming these important lines is seriously entertained, it



must be politic to encourage as much as possible the overland traffic between Russia and China.

By way of completing my information on the subject of tea in Russia, I have endeavoured to ascertain the date of its introduction, but without any positive result. It is certain, however, that the Russians had a considerable trade with the East before the Mongol invasion; and doubtless the Mongols who came from the plains bordering on China were acquainted with the use of tea. It is known that Russia, after her subjugation, used to carry on a regular trade between Novgorod and the North of Europe on one side, and Persia, India, and China on the other. The Russians, after the expulsion of the Tartars and the conquest of Siberia, endeavoured to establish commercial intercourse with China, and sent their first ambassador to Peking in 1606, though he never arrived there, owing to some revolution in Mongolia. Several other embassies made fruitless attempts to enter the Chinese empire, and it was not until 1654 that Baikoff, with a suite of attachés, succeeded, after a journey of two years, in reaching Peking. Baikoff, annoyed at the emperor's declining to receive him personally, returned to Russia in 1657. No treaty of commerce had been concluded, but the ambassador had discovered several practicable roads between Siberia and Peking; and since that time caravans of merchants have journeyed constantly between Russia and China. The English about



this period did a considerable trade with Archangel, and it appears probable that the first Russian caravan from China brought tea, and that a certain amount was soon afterwards exported to England; for we read in Pepy's "Diary," "Sent for a cup of tea, a Chinese drink, of which I have never drunk before," under the date of 1661.

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## CHAPTER XII.

## CLUBS, ASSEMBLIES, AND BALLS.

THE best club in Moscow in some respects is the English Club, originally founded by Englishmen, but composed at present almost exclusively of Russians.

It is strange that in England, where the virtues of domestic life are held in so much esteem, clubs should have been invented ; but such is the case. In the English Club at Moscow the separatist principle is carried out to its fullest extent. And as women are never admitted, neither balls, nor masquerades, nor concerts, nor fêtes of any kind take place there as at the other clubs. The English Club is kept open until midnight, after which all who remain are liable to a fine. There is a supper every evening, and house dinners twice a week, but there is no dining *à la carte*. The house,



situated in the Tverskoy, the principal street in Moscow, is large and commodious. It contains an excellent reading-room, in which all the native and a large number of foreign journals are received, including the principal English newspapers and magazines. There are several billiard-rooms and card-rooms, but hazard and roulette are not permitted. The number of members is limited to six hundred, and candidates for admission have often to wait several years for their chance of the ballot. The affairs of the club are managed by six directors elected annually, to whom is entrusted the purchase of wine and the regulation of prices generally.

The Merchants' Club, according to the terms of its constitution, is composed of merchants, professors, doctors, and artists possessing diplomas from the Academy of Arts. The club is open every day, and in winter balls and masquerades are given. On ordinary occasions the doors are closed at two in the morning, after which time the members who still remain are, as at the English Club, subjected to a fine, which is doubled from half-hour to half-hour. It has been calculated that a member staying all night in either of these clubs would, at seven in the morning, owe the committee the sum of 16,384 roubles. The society at the Merchants' Club is very superior to what is generally understood by merchants' society in Russia. Its ball-room is one of the best in Moscow, and will hold as many as 1,500 persons.



The only other club of importance in Moscow (for there is also a small German club) is the club of the Nobility. Here, as at the other establishments of the same kind, the members dine together once or twice a week. The dinner, which is partly Russian, partly French in style, is admirably cooked and served, and costs only a rouble, or a rouble and a half—exclusive, of course, of wine. Several English journals are also received at this club; indeed, our principal daily papers and our illustrated journals are taken in at all of them.

But the most remarkable place of réunion is the Assembly of the Nobility, where the nobles of the Moscow government—that is to say, the hereditary ones, in the possession of land—meet for the discussion of their affairs, but which owes its chief celebrity to its balls. This assembly-room is the largest, and probably the handsomest, in the world.

Like the hall of St. George in the palace of the Kremlin, its walls and the pillars which support the roof are entirely of alabaster, relieved only by delicate gilt mouldings. It is entirely without drapery, and the same effect which I noticed in the Hall of St. George is produced by the reflection of the light from the large masses of white. The Assembly of the Nobility will contain four or five thousand persons, and its capabilities are sufficiently tested whenever it is made the scene of a grand ball.

Round the ball-room, and raised a few steps above it,



is a spacious gallery for the accommodation of all who are not actually engaged in dancing. There is also an upper gallery for spectators ; but this is chiefly used on the nights devoted to concerts. In the rooms at the side, card-tables are arranged, and in the largest of these dancing sometimes takes place, when there is not a sufficient number of persons to fill the large hall. All the corridors, ante-chambers, and refreshment-rooms are magnificently furnished, and there is a special suite of apartments for the use of the Emperor, whom the Assembly has the honour to reckon among its members. Here it was that Alexander II., in his interview with the nobles of Moscow, rebuked them for their tardiness in carrying out the measures of reform projected by him, and refused to be present at the entertainment offered to him. Two years before I had seen his Majesty at the coronation-ball given to him in this hall, on which occasion the nobles, who perhaps did not believe in the Emperor's reported intention to emancipate the peasants, were profuse in their manifestations of loyalty.

Here, too, three years later, in 1862, and at the beginning of 1863, were held the stormy meetings at which the nobles or manorial proprietors of the Moscow province voted an address to the Emperor demanding a constitution.

An account, from direct observation, of the proceedings on this occasion will be found in a future chapter.



Dancing in Russia is very much like dancing in any other European country, except that in Russia the ball always ends with a mazurka, of which the rhythm and the step are known everywhere, but not the figures and general character. A kind of follow-my-leader aspect is given to the mazurka, by all the succeeding couples imitating the evolutions of the first. Another peculiarity of the dance consists in the ladies choosing their own partners, a process which is effected in a variety of ingenious ways more or less complimentary to the gentlemen selected. Sometimes as the men pass by in ignominious procession, the lady who wishes to make one of them her cavalier claps her hands as the fortunate individual passes. Or a lady holds a small looking-glass; the aspiring partners pass behind and look into the mirror, when the lady wipes off with her hand the image of him that pleaseth her not, and accepts the services of the agreeable one with a bow. The mazurka is a graceful dance, but it also demands energy and requires the time to be marked by vigorous applications of the boot-heel to the polished floor. It is known to be of Polish origin, and it has a rhythmical character, which distinguishes it agreeably from the sliding monotony of the quadrille. One other peculiarity of Russian balls may be mentioned: in the waltz or polka, a lady is never engaged for the entire dance, but only for one or at most two turns round the room.



In Russia, as in England, a ball without a supper would be regarded as an incomplete and absurd entertainment. Perhaps, as the Russian mode of dining has been adopted by a large class in England, Russian suppers will one day be introduced. I can best describe a Russian supper by saying that it is a dinner without ceremony or soup. At the suppers of the Assembly, meat, fish, poultry, and game are served hot, and are accompanied or followed by salads, pastry, fruit, and preserves, the wine suitable to each course being brought round exactly as at a dinner. If there are too many persons at the ball to sit down all at once, the service is repeated from beginning to end whenever a fresh batch of dancers arrive in the supper-room. I must not take leave of the Assembly-room without mentioning the mode of lighting it up; that is to say, the manner in which the wax-candles are set light to. Those who visit the Assembly in the day-time, and are attracted by the beauty of the chandeliers, may observe that a thin thread connects the wicks of all the tapers in each, and that all these clusters of wax-lights are again connected by means of the same almost imperceptible thread, which, like a telegraphic wire, runs from one to the other all round the room. All the thread or string has been steeped in naphtha or some other highly inflammable spirit. At the hour fixed for the opening of the ball there is only a faint half-light in the place; but at a given signal one



end of the prepared string is ignited, and instantly a line of fire is seen to dart round the room, encircling each of the chandeliers, and in a few seconds changing comparative darkness into the most brilliant light. This system of lighting has also been adopted in the Imperial palaces. Independently of the surprising and almost magical effect which it produces in an immense ball-room, it has its advantages in any apartment where a large number of candles are used; for it enables a single servant, with nothing but a lucifer, to light the whole of them at one lighting.

Two remarkable customs may here be mentioned in connection with visiting in Russia. In making a morning's call, it is considered disrespectful to appear in what Englishmen and Frenchman consider morning-dress; and only a foreigner newly arrived in the country would be excused for committing such a gross breach of good manners. The evening-coat is held in such estimation that not alone is it "the only wear" in which to present yourself to a lady, or even to a gentleman with whom you happen to be on terms of great ceremony, but it is indispensable for entering the Gallery of the Hermitage at St. Petersburg, simply because the Hermitage is one of the Imperial palaces. For visiting purposes evening costume is obligatory from the first thing in the morning. It would be a very great mistake to infer from this that social intercourse in Russia is rendered stiff and tiresome by a number of vain



formalities ; for there are no more thoroughly sociable people than the Russians. Only it happens to be the fashion with them to put on in the morning the solemn garments which in England are not assumed until the evening. On the other hand, the Russians have invented a very ingenious mode of avoiding mere ceremonial visits altogether. Those who do not wish to call on their friends at the new year send three roubles to the poor ; and on New Year's Day the journals publish a list of persons who have given to charities the money they would otherwise have spent on cards. This is accepted by everyone as a polite and satisfactory alternative.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE RUSSIAN GIPSIES.

THE gipsies in the centre and south of Russia keep cattle, which find abundant pasture in the large grassy plains of the steppes ; or they devote themselves to horse-curing, and now and then to horse-stealing. Indeed, according to general report, they will steal anything. But when they labour for their living, it is as veterinary surgeons that the men occupy themselves ; the women telling fortunes, dealing in trinkets, or in some cases singing and dancing in companies. They are not liked by proprietors of estates, whom they are in the habit of robbing ; the peasants despise them, and, one way and another, they have been a good deal persecuted. Before venturing to pitch their tents in the field or wood where they wish to pass the night, they are obliged to obtain the consent of the landowner ;



and I am told that this is usually granted, either from a feeling of humanity, or perhaps because the gipsies are known to abstain from robbing the person who shelters them.

In the severest weather these hardy wanderers, who, like the "moujiks," wear sheepskins, have still nothing but their thin tents of coarse linen to protect them from the outer cold. The Russians say, that the gipsy children, when infants, are rolled in the snow; and it would be scarcely less wonderful that the little creatures should not die from such treatment, than that they should afterwards be able to support, without apparent inconvenience, a temperature of twenty degrees and upwards of cold (Réaumur's thermometer). The nomadic gipsies must not be confounded with the singing gipsies of Moscow, who, if (as many people imagine) civilization means luxury, are highly civilized. But if the gipsy vocalists are the delight of Moscow, the wandering gipsies of the plains have had the honour of suggesting to Poushkin his poem of the "Tsigani," which has delighted all Russia:—

"An unruly band of gipsies" (commences the poem) "wander through Bessarabia.

They pass the night beneath coarse tents, close to the river-side.

Such a night's lodging is as sweet as liberty itself.

The carts and kibitkas have carpet-covered hoods;

Between the wheels burn fires,

Around which each family prepares its supper.

The horses are grazing in the wide field,

A tame bear lies free behind the carts.



All is life and liberty.

Then the various families quietly prepare for the morrow's journey :

The women are singing, the children screaming, and the sound of the anvil is heard.

Next a dead silence comes over the scene ;

All is calm and still.

The barking of the dogs and the neighing of the horses are alone audible ;

The fires are everywhere extinguished, and all the gipsies are at rest.

But the moon shines in the sky, and lights up the peaceful scene, And there is still one old man sitting awake and alone in his tent.

He warms himself with the last heat of the dying embers, And gazes into the dark distance of the misty field.

His youthful daughter has gone to walk in the plains ;

But she is accustomed to a wild boundless freedom, and will return.

It is night already, and soon the moon will leave her habitation ; And yet Zemphira does not come back, and the old man's frugal supper is getting cold.

She appears at last ;

A youth, a stranger, and unknown to the tribe, follows her.

The old man knows not the stranger.

'Father,' says the girl, 'I bring a visitor with me ;

I met him in the field behind the hill,

And invited him to pass the night in our encampment.

He wishes to be a wandering gipsy like our selves ;

He is pursued by the law, but I will be his friend and companion.

His name is Aleko, and he is ready to follow me everywhere."

The old man welcomes Aleko, tells him to remain with the gipsies, and recommends him to take to some occupation ; "forge iron, or sing songs, and go round the villages with a bear."

The next morning the gipsies rise with the sun, the



tents are struck, the horses harnessed to the carts, and the band is soon scattered over the wide plain.

“The asses bear the playful children in their panniers;  
Husbands, brothers, wives and maidens follow.  
What screaming and riot!  
The songs of the gipsies, and the roaring of the bear impatiently  
rattling his chain,  
The variety of the coloured rags, the half-nakedness of the children,  
The barking and howling of the dogs,  
The noise of the bagpipes, and the rattling of the carts—  
All is poverty, wildness, and confusion,  
But full of movement and life.  
What a contrast to our dead effeminacy,  
To that frivolous and idle life of ours—  
A life monotonous as the songs of slaves!”

Aleko, as he departs, gazes sadly on the vacant plain, unable to explain the cause of his secret grief; for he is with the black-eyed Zemphira, and “is a free dweller on the face of the earth, with the bright sun in his southern glory shining upon him.” But, in spite of the careless liberty of the gipsy’s life, Aleko is still not his own master. Sometimes “the distant star of glory” beckons him; at others visions of luxury and pleasure come before him. He cannot reconcile himself to his lot.

“Tell me, my friend,” says Zemphira, “do you not regret what you have left for ever?”

“What have I left?” asks Aleko.

“Could you but know the slavery of our suffocating towns!  
Men cluster together, and never breathe the fresh morning breeze,  
Nor know the smell of the sweet spring meadows.



They are ashamed of love ;  
They traffic in their own liberty ;  
They chase away their thoughts ;  
They bow their heads before idols,  
And ask for money and chains !  
What have I left ?  
The agitation of treason, the sentence of prejudice,  
The crowd's insane persecution, or brilliant dishonour ! ”

Zemphira reminds him of the luxurious life and the beautiful women he has left. Aleko replies that they are not comparable to Zemphira and freedom ; but the old man sagely remarks that “liberty is not always dear to those accustomed to effeminacy.” He relates a tradition of a Russian exiled by the Tzar who took refuge with his tribe ; “he possessed the beautiful gift of song, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.” But he pined for the scenes he had left ; and though every one loved him, and though, when the rapid Danube was frozen and the winter whirlwind was howling, they covered the old man with a soft downy fur, yet he could never get accustomed to the hardships of their beggarly life. Pale and emaciated he wandered about, saying that God had punished him for his sins, and walking on the banks of the Danube poured forth bitter tears when he remembered his far-distant birth-place. “And on his death-bed,” concludes the old man, “he ordered that his bones—or they would not know peace even in death—should be carried to the south.”

At last Aleko has “skaken off the chains of civiliza-



tion and is free ; he has forgotten his former life, and is accustomed to that of the gipsies. He has learnt their poor but sonorous language, and enjoys the intoxication of their eternal idleness."

Two years afterwards the old man is basking in the sun, while the daughter sits before the cradle and sings. Aleko listens and turns pale as he hears the following words :—

"Old husband, cruel husband,  
Cut me, burn me ;  
I fear not you,  
Nor knife, nor fire.  
I hate you ;  
I despise you ;  
I love another,  
And loving him will die."

*Aleko.* "Silence ! Your singing annoys me : I am not fond of your wild songs."

*Zemphira.* "You do not like them ! but what is that to me ? I sing for myself." And she repeats the song with the addition of these verses :—

"He is fresher than the spring,  
Hotter than the summer's sun ;  
How young and brave he is !  
And how much he loves me !  
How I caressed him  
In the silence of the night !  
And how we laughed  
At your grey hairs !"

That night, when Aleko is sleeping, he sobs and moans in his heavy slumber. "Do not touch him,"



says the old man; "there is a tradition among the Russians that at night a household ghost stifles the breath of the sleeper; he disappears at daybreak. Sit with me."

"Father, he whispers 'Zemphira'!" exclaims the girl.

"He seeks you even in his dreams," is the answer; "you are dearer to him than peace."

"His love is hateful to me," she replies.

"Do not believe in evil dreams," she says to Aleko when he awakes, complaining of a terrible vision.

"I believe in nothing," answers Aleko; "I believe neither in dreams, nor in tender promises, nor in your heart."

"Father, she does not love me!" he says to the old man, after Zemphira has gone.

"Be comforted, my friend," responds the latter; "she is only a child: your grief is unreasonable. Your love is sad and heavy: a girl's is a jest, a laugh. Be consoled. Who can say to a maiden's heart: 'Love once, and do not change?'"

But Aleko swears that, if deceived, he will be avenged; and a highly dramatic scene occurs—in which he surprises the lovers and stabs them; the girl repeating the last line of her song, "And loving him I die."

Then the old man approaches Aleko, and says:—

"Leave us, thou bitter man!

We are free and wild; we have no law;



We do not torture or kill ;  
We want neither blood nor groans ;  
But we should scorn to live with a murderer.  
You are not born for a free life—  
You live for yourself alone.  
Your voice would now be horrible to us ;  
We are timid and kind-hearted,  
You are bad and bold.  
Leave us—farewell ; peace be with you !’

“He said ; and the whole encampment started off at once,  
And departed from the valley of the terrible dead.  
Soon all had disappeared ;  
But in that horrible field remained one solitary kибitka,  
Covered with a wretched carpet.  
So sometimes, on the approach of winter,  
On a foggy morning, when a flock of cranes  
Forsake the fields, and fly shrieking towards the south,  
One of them, pierced by a fatal shot,  
Remains sadly behind,  
With wounded, drooping wing.  
Night came. Nobody made fire by the side of that dismal  
kибitka,  
And nobody slept beneath its hood.”

Probably, from the author’s point of view, the poem of the “Gipsies” owes all its importance to the character of Aleko, who longs for liberty in the midst of a life “monotonous as the songs of slaves,” and who is yet unworthy of freedom, and unable to attain it because he “lives for himself alone,” and cannot govern his own passions. But the description of the gipsy encampment is full of picturesqueness and truthfulness ; and it is for that reason chiefly that I have



translated it, as giving the best possible account of a band of Russian gipsies at rest and in movement.

Those who have read Mr. Borrow's admirable work on the "Gipsies of Spain," will remember that it opens with a short account of the Moscow gipsies, and especially of a party of them that Mr. Borrow met at Marina Roshche, who, being addressed by him in the Romany language, welcomed him in Russian with shouts of "*Kak mui vas lioubim!*" (How much we love you!) These were gipsy vocalists, who live not in tents, but in the restaurants or traktirs of Skin-them-alive Street, their favourite locality. I visited one of their habitations, and found, as it appeared to me, that the inmates endeavoured to combine the pleasures of a nomadic life with those of the ordinary *vie de café*. Disdaining benches and chairs, the gipsies had formed a species of encampment on the floor; the old men and women, with the children, sat or lay together in groups, and the young girls wandered about the room seeking what they might smoke or drink. As nearly all these young girls were pretty or graceful, or had beautiful eyes or insidious manners, they smoked and drank whatever they pleased, which happened at the moment to be cigarettes and tea. The venerable parents seemed to be fond of rum, and went through the most animated and expressive pantomime with the view of making known their desire to become intoxicated,



shouting at the same time "Rom! rom!" The old men, with their long black hair and beards, and their bronzed complexions, and the old women, with their *belle laideur* (as Heine says of Madame Viardot), waited on the ground with an air of dignity until their young dependants (or rather supporters) brought them tea and tobacco. Then the men began to smoke the long chibouk, and the old women once more called out for "Rom." The *traktirs* of the gipsies in Skin-them-alive Street are well—that is to say numerous—attended in the evening; and stories are told of young men who have ruined themselves in entertaining the inmates. I have already said that the gipsies have made great progress in that sort of civilization which consists in drinking unlimited quantities of champagne.

But although the songs of the gipsy companies may be heard in their own habitations, it is at public balls and concerts that the performers are heard and seen to the greatest advantage. The beauty of the young girls is very remarkable, and is only surpassed by the ugliness of the old women. Extreme delicacy of feature, and the power of expressing vividly every variety of emotion, are possessed by the young gipsies of Moscow as by no other women: in fact they form a gipsy aristocracy, and bear about the same resemblance to the gipsies of other parts that the racer does to the cart-horse. In repose they appear haughty and cold;



but they are full of feeling and passion directly they begin to sing, and their songs belong to themselves as thoroughly as their costumes and their gestures. In attire they are to the gipsies of the fields what the picturesque is to the ludicrous, or the fanciful to the grotesque. They wear all colours, and always the most brilliant, such as no other people could appear in without producing the harshest effects. Instead of being clothed in rags, like their relatives of the plains, their dresses are of the richest materials, and I have said that all the women possess either beauty, or a sort of picturesque hideousness. The physiognomies of the youths are insipid as compared with those of the old men, which are strongly marked and full of character.

The gipsy songs are very melodious, and thoroughly original. M. Xavier Marmier tells us, in his interesting *Lettres sur la Russie*, that after hearing a party of gipsies at one of the Moscow clubs, he asked the chief of the troop for the music of some of the airs, to which the said chief is reported to have answered that "what came from the heart, could not be rendered visible to the eye"—or some similar absurdity. If the chief of any gipsy troop made such a reply, he perhaps deceived himself, but most certainly misled M. Marmier; for, of course, everything that can be sung can be noted, and all the melodies sung by the gipsies have been noted, published, and can be procured at all the Moscow music-shops, though it is



quite true that the gipsies alone can sing them with proper effect. Like the Cossacks, and the singing companies of many of the Russian regiments, the gipsies, when about to sing, form themselves into a circle, in the middle of which stands one of the principal vocalists of the band with the accompanist, who also acts as conductor, by his or her side. The instrument of the conductor is the *balalaika*, a kind of guitar. Every gipsy song is an "air with chorus;" and the chorus is sometimes accompanied or followed by a dance, in which the performers work themselves up to a state of excitement bordering upon frenzy, and indulge in the same convulsive movements which are said to characterize the dancing of the Bayadères. The words of many of the gipsy songs are touching from their very simplicity. A young girl tells how her lover gained her heart, how he swore to live for her alone, and how he "loves her no more;" and the refrain, "No, no more, he loves me no more," is repeated at the end of each verse by the chorus. Or she addresses to the nightingale a similar lament, and the chorus echoes, "O nightingale, sweetly-singing nightingale." Frequently the refrain is not in the same time as the air, and it is always executed more rapidly. The gipsies do not sing love-songs alone, but also drinking songs, and, above all, gipsy songs, in the which the vocalist boasts emphatically that he is not a noble, nor a merchant, nor a peasant, nor a Tartar, but a gipsy to whom the hat



must be taken off; and then yells of delight and the maddest gestures proceed from the whole troop. It has been already mentioned, in the chapter on Russian music, that what the Moscow and St. Petersburg music-publishers call gipsy melodies are often airs, written more or less in the gipsy style, by contemporary Russian composers. Those who are anxious to know more on the subject of gipsy music, should read, though not with implicit confidence, Liszt's brilliant little work, *Des Bohémiens et de leur Musique en Hongrie*. It may be doubted, in spite of Liszt, whether in Hungary, any more than in Russia, the gipsies have really introduced original melodies of their own.

I have said that the inhabitants of Moscow are enthusiastic in their admiration of the gipsy troops. The great Catalani, according to a Moscow anecdote, after hearing a certain Bohemian *prima donna*, took from her own shoulders a shawl that had been given to her by the Russian Empress, and placed it on those of the gipsy girl, as a tribute from art to nature. Mr. Borrow, led away, no doubt, by his philo-Bohemianism, says that Russia is the only country in which people know how to sing. It would be a mistake to say that the Moscow gipsies are the best singers in the world; but certainly there are no singers like them.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## PORTRAIT OF A DEVOUT RUSSIAN GENTLEMAN.

ANTON ANTONOVITCH was a good and pious Russian, who held sin, soap, and razors in about equal detestation, despised cold water as a destructive luxury, and, so far from holding that cleanliness is next to godliness, looked upon that supposed virtue as the origin if not of all, at least of a great many evils. A man with white hands, delicately-pared nails, a clean face, well-brushed hair, and neatly-arranged moustachios, was apt, he thought, to be proud of his personal appearance; whereas, unwashed, unkempt, and unshorn, he would, in all probability, be full of humility and self-contempt. There were other reasons why Anton Antonovitch retained his beard. In the first place, his ancestors had always worn theirs (Anton Antonovitch



had ancestors), and it did not become the present generation to assume to be wiser than their forefathers. Moreover, man had been made in the image of the Deity, and it was irreverential to interfere in any way with the likeness. In addition to this, no good, but only ingenious and deceptive forms of evil had ever come out of the west; and shaving was an occidental custom introduced by the great barber-Emperor Peter I.

It has been said that Anton Antonovitch had ancestors, out of respect to whom I suppress his family name. One of them has an historical place among the most celebrated of the old Russian poets, and had held a high position at the court of Catherine. The brother of Anton Antonovitch was a general of division, and he had himself been an officer in the Artillery of the Guard. No amount, then, of *à priori* reasoning could have led to the conclusion that Anton Antonovitch would be uncleanly in his person; and when he was in the army, his colonel was naturally astonished, amazed, and indignant at the discreditable appearance he presented on parade. By the regulations of the service he was, of course, unable to wear his beard; but he frequently omitted to shave, and carried out his system of facial and manual uncleanness with the most scrupulous exactness. The colonel remonstrated in vain; Anton Antonovitch would not wash. There was no precedent for dismissing an officer from the service for such an offence, and it was impossible to address a report to



the Emperor on the subject. At last the commanding officer bethought himself of an expedient. He could not order the offending—I had nearly said offensive—lieutenant into arrest every time he appeared in an unbecoming condition by the side of his battery, or Anton Antonovitch would have passed the whole of his time in prison; still more impossible was it to administer corporal punishment to an officer and a nobleman. But Anton Antonovitch had a servant, a gunner in his company, whose duty it was to attend to his master's wardrobe. The colonel added to these functions the superintendence of his toilet, and promised the man a dozen lashes if he ever allowed the lieutenant to make his appearance unshaved, unwashed, or with a button of his uniform out of place. On two or three occasions when, in spite of his most earnest endeavours, he had found it impossible to get his master up to the requisite point of neatness, the servant was flogged. At last Anton Antonovitch could stand it no longer. He was a kind-hearted man, and rather than expose the unfortunate gunner to fresh thrashings, and having an aversion, founded on principle, to soap and water, he quitted the service.

On his own estate Anton Antonovitch could appear as he thought fit, so he allowed his beard to grow, and replaced his uniform, not by the black coat of ordinary civilized life, but by the national caftan now worn only by peasants and the lower class of merchants, but



formerly by every one in Russia, from the serf to the Czar. The retired officer at the same time became a great biblical student: or rather he continued his theological studies, for he had always been religiously inclined. At last he resolved to devote the remainder of his life to idleness and pilgrimages. He sold his five hundred serfs, with the ground to which they were attached, his house, his furniture, and all his wearing apparel, with the exception of a caftan, a couple of shirts, and a pair of trousers; he gave all to the poor; and with a long stick and a dirty face, started on a journey of devotion to the Greek monastery on Mount Athos.

I have mentioned two things which will in particular appear strange to the reader; first, that the pious Anton Antonovitch sold his serfs; secondly, that in a commercial country like Russia he was able to undertake a long journey without having a single copeik in his pocket. He believed, however, that to have liberated his slaves would have been to send them to utter perdition. He had faith in the old patriarchal serf-holding system, which provided the peasant with a house, a patch of ground, a horse, a cow, and the necessary implements of husbandry; insured him against the chances of famine, and guaranteed to him in his old age an asylum and abundant means of subsistence in the midst of his own family. "A proprietor might ill-treat his serfs," I have heard Anton Antonovitch say, "as



he might injure the cattle on his estate; but in either case he would be looked upon as a madman; for he cannot injure his serf without injuring himself, and he would be despised as much as a person who would beat his own children, or his wife."

Thus Anton Antonovitch, penniless and in the meanest attire, contrived to reach Mount Athos, in Asia Minor, where the faithful make their devotions to our miraculous Lady of Iberia. Hence he retraced his steps through the Crimea, to the ancient city of Kieff, with its monasteries, and its caves full of the bones of the martyrs murdered for their faith by the infidel Tartars. From Kieff he returned to Moscow, "The Mother," "The Holy," "The White-Walled," whence he lost no time in making a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to the Laura of the Holy Trinity, about forty miles distant; and having prostrated himself before the uncorrupted body of St. Sergius, and kissed the relics, he proceeded to the monastery of the New Jerusalem, to implore a blessing on a fresh journey he already contemplated to the Laura of St. Alexander of the Neva, near St. Petersburg. The monastery of the New Jerusalem, which, like that of the Holy Trinity, is near Moscow, had a wonderful interest for Anton Antonovitch; as it must indeed have for every one. It is built on the model of the Holy City, the principal churches and chapels of which have been reproduced with wonderful exactness. However, our pilgrim re-



turned to Moscow, and regardless of the excellent railway which connects the two capitals, started on foot for St. Petersburg, where in due time he paid his respects to the "uncorrupted body" of St. Alexander "Nevsky." St. Alexander "Nevsky," like Anton Antonovitch himself, was a military saint, and owes his canonization to the victory gained by him over the Swedes, and the Teutonic Knights, on the ice of the Neva—the first encounter, by the way, that ever took place between Russia and the West of Europe.

Returning once more to Moscow, Anton Antonovitch found ample scope for the exercise of his devotional energy in visiting the dozens of monasteries and the hundreds of churches which the city and its environs contain. He also walked from time to time to the Laura of the Holy Trinity and the New Jerusalem, and occasionally his religious enthusiasm carried him as far as Kieff, already well known to him. In fact, he occupied the whole of his time in pilgrimages to the Russian Holy Places, devoting the necessary intervals between his journeys to the study of sacred literature, contemplation, and smoking. For Anton Antonovitch was a great smoker; not on the road, when he was proceeding to some monastery, but only when he was at Moscow, living with his friends. Perhaps it would be wrong to smoke on a pilgrimage; but however that may be, there was at least one very sufficient reason why Anton Antonovitch never did so: he had no



money wherewith to buy tobacco. If money was offered to him, he would not refuse it, but he gave it away again without delay to the poor ; and though at the house of a friend he would smoke like a Turk, his principles only allowed him to satisfy his present necessities : if a pound of tobacco had been presented to him, he would at once have sold it, and bestowed the money in charity. But it was only at Moscow, and at some of the monasteries, that Anton Antonovitch had friends. On the road he stopped, when he was hungry or fatigued, at the first peasant's hut he came to, always sure of a hospitable welcome. This hospitality will be awarded to any traveller ; and on roads where there are no inns, travellers of all kinds are sometimes only too glad to accept of it. In most cases, the owner of the hut will refuse the money that is offered him in acknowledgment of a night's lodging and such simple refreshment as he may be able to provide ; but when the guest is a poor pilgrim, it is a sacred duty to entertain him, and the peasant performs " the rites of hospitality " in the ancient and religious meaning of the phrase.

I have said that Anton Antonovitch was not careful about his costume. To put it more correctly, he was particular that it should be of the worst possible description. He never wore boots even in winter, nor a fur coat, nor indeed any overcoat, however cold the weather might be. I have seen him



on a January morning, when the thermometer marked 16° (Réaumur) below freezing point, wearing an ordinary caftan and shoes without goloshes; he had not even gloves; though I cannot say that his hands were uncovered, for they were covered with dirt. His clothing was so old that it might have been one of the last purchases he made before turning mendicant. His shoes, however, must have been renewed from time to time, for shoe-leather *will* wear out.

When the war against the Western Powers leagued with the infidel Turks broke out, Anton Antonovitch, as became a constant devotee at the shrines of those warrior-saints St. Sergius and St. Alexander Nevsky, went, burning with military and religious ardour, and splashed all over with mud, to offer his services to the Government. He could not re-enter the regular army, which was fully officered, but he was very desirous of obtaining employment in the militia of his province; and as a member of one of the principal territorial families of the district, and a retired officer, he imagined he would have no difficulty in getting appointed to a commission. Will it be believed that, although the ——— Militia was under orders for the seat of war, and officers of experience were much wanted in the regiment, the services of Anton Antonovitch were positively declined? He was so evidently unfitted for duties requiring order and precision, that, even if he had not in his carelessness stumbled into an enormous



puddle immediately before entering the office of the staff, the general would have been quite justified in not accepting his patriotic offer. In some State record or other the fact of Anton Antonovitch having volunteered to serve in the Crimea must have been chronicled (in Russia everything is chronicled that is connected with the doings of the Government), together with the general's reason for rejecting his proffered sword. The entry of the military superintendent must have been very nearly as follows:—"September, 1854—Anton Antonovitch volunteered. Refused. Too dirty to serve."

Anton Antonovitch, independently of his general wish to serve his country, had doubtless special reasons for desiring to take part in the war of 1854. In all probability he had visions of a triumphal entry into Constantinople, a "holy place" to which he had long wished to make a pilgrimage. To Anton Antonovitch, Constantinople was not merely the key to universal empire, it was the ancient residence of the patriarchs of the Greek Church; it was the city which had sent forth the missionaries who converted Russia; it was the capital of the great Christian Empire, from which, after the fall of the last Palæologus, Russia received the two-headed eagle, to be carried back sooner or later to Byzantium.

When I was first introduced to Anton Antonovitch, I had already been warned that I should be



surprised at his appearance. He was staying at Moscow with the friends already mentioned, whose house he made his head-quarters during the intervals of his pilgrimages. On his coming to live with them they had ventured to hope that he would adopt the costume, and as much as possible the habits, of civilized life; but they had reckoned without their guest, who was prepared for no such change. As he was simply in want of everything, his friends had to go to the tailor's to buy him a coat, to the hatter's to buy him a hat, &c., like Mother Hubbard with her dog. Anton Antonovitch let them pursue their mad course. Wash he would not; to shave he was ashamed; but he accepted the garments, and the very next day started on a pilgrimage to the Laura of the Holy Trinity.

When he returned he was in rags. He had given away his shirts, his boots, his coat, in short, the whole of his decent apparel, to the poor, and came back to his hospitable entertainers in a miserable caftan and a pair of slippers. What could be done? This man was the declared enemy of superfluity, and his friends had furnished him with a number of shirts, to say nothing of cloth coats, and other abominations of the West; such, for instance, as waistcoats. It was evident that Anton Antonovitch was irreclaimable. To remonstrate with him would have been absurd. After he had given away an estate with five hundred peasants, what importance could he attach to some linen and a



couple of suits of clothes ? It was necessary, then, to accept him as he was. Like the Cossacks to whom Haxthausen applies the phrase, "Sint ut sunt aut non sunt," one mode of life was alone possible to Anton Antonovitch. He could only exist as a sort of dignified mendicant. I say "dignified," because if he received, it must be remembered that he never had any occasion to ask, and in the midst of his vagabondage he had not lost an atom of his self-respect. On the contrary, he must have been proud of his poverty, though I must do him the justice to say that he never called attention to it ; nor did he in his conversation or manner in any way affect that humility of which his raggedness and his dirt might have been regarded as the badges. He certainly maintained that it was not good for man to be clean ; but with his general untidiness, sheer laziness must have had at least as much to do as principle. What rendered Anton Antonovitch tolerable, and even interesting, was the fact that he had literally sold all he had and given it to the poor. Here was a real sacrifice to conviction ; but coupled with it there must have been some predisposition to untidiness, a strong natural dislike to the towel, a dread of soap, a contempt for the nail-brush, and a mortal antipathy to cold water. It is said of the founder of the Russian navy, that though he succeeded through his indomitable will in at last becoming a good sailor, he had constitutionally a horror of water. This happens to be



untrue of Peter the Great, but it was certainly the case with Anton Antonovitch.

But I was speaking of my introduction to this extraordinary man. I had been told that he was a strange-looking person, and he indeed *did* look odd. He was upwards of six feet high, with broad shoulders, a big head, long black uncombed hair, bushy eyebrows, and a thick grizzly beard. More than this I could not distinguish, for he was enveloped in a cloud of tobacco-smoke. With his long chibouk in one hand, and in the other a volume of the Psalms, of which he occasionally recited a verse in a loud sonorous voice, he stood erect with his back against the wall, as motionless as an image. When I was presented to him he bowed with solemn dignity, but did not say a word; and as I understood that he spoke no language but Russian, and did not wish to expose my ignorance by attempting to address him in that tongue, no conversation took place between us. But when I had heard the particulars of his life from his friends (to whom, and not to Anton Antonovitch, I was making my visit) I felt anxious to know something more of him, and endeavoured through the medium of my host, to enter into conversation with him. But he was not friendly; or to be nearer the truth, he was slightly bearish.

One day, however, he heard me say that I intended to visit the Laura of the Holy Trinity, which, both as



a fortress and as a monastery, is full of historical interest. Then the features of Anton Antonovitch relaxed; he smiled, his eyes brightened, and he said, "*Vous allez, donc, à la Troitsa, monsieur? Vous en serez bien content.*" I was not a little astonished, and all the Russians present were amazed; for none of them had ever heard Anton Antonovitch speak French before, and we had often talked together in that language about our devotee's past life, his wandering habits, his uncleanness, &c.: on these occasions not a muscle in his countenance moved; and it was impossible, judging from his appearance, to imagine that he had the slightest suspicion of what was being said. Doubtless he had learnt French as a child, and at the military school, but every one supposed that he had forgotten it. He, in fact, wished to do so, like the French wit who, not very wittily, boasted that he had forgotten German, "*par mépris.*" However, the name of the Troitsa (Trinity) had roused him, and he was determined not to let a foreigner visit that monastery without enlightening him on the subject of its history. From the Troitsa he passed to the Kremlin; and finding that I could listen with interest to his remarks about the Russian churches and Church, he at last asked me, with some anxiety, if we knew what had become of Palmer? I replied, that Palmer, having been convicted of poisoning his brother, had been hanged by the neck until he was dead. Anton Antonovitch looked



incredulous and somewhat annoyed; his friends could scarcely restrain their laughter on hearing of the fate which had befallen the only acquaintance he seemed to have possessed in England.

“Impossible!” exclaimed Anton Antonovitch; “he was the friend of Mr. Mouravieff. Mr. Mouravieff mentions him in his travels.”

I replied, that Palmer had once been a not disreputable, though a sporting character, and that Mr. Mouravieff, the historian of the Russian Church, might possibly have met him; but that for all that he had been hanged. At last I found it was not against Anton Antonovitch the laugh should have been raised; he was speaking of Palmer, the author of *Dissertations on the Russian Church*, who is, in fact, mentioned by Mr. Mouravieff in one of his interesting works.

Having now admitted his knowledge of French, Anton Antonovitch could not avoid joining in the general conversation. He came away from his place against the wall, leaving a black mark where he had been in the habit of resting his head, sat down at the table, abandoned his long pipe, and even consented to accept a “papiros,” or cigarette, which he nevertheless looked upon as a sign of the decadence.

“The old Russians smoked pipes,” he said: “not merely the peasantry and the merchants, but the most distinguished nobles. The present race,” he added,



“are ashamed of their ancestors; they are becoming children of the West in everything.”

He then asked whether I imagined any one of the present day could wield the massive clubs, the maces, and the battle-axes, which are exhibited in the Treasury of the Kremlin, and which belonged to the ancient Czars and their officers? Had I seen the brancard in which Charles XII. was carried at the battle of Pultawa, and the iron-pointed stick which Ivan the Terrible (or Redoubtable, as Anton Antonovitch preferred to call him) was wont to place on the foot of any one he happened to be conversing with, occasionally piercing his interlocutor's boot, and, if he ostensibly winced, transfixing his instep? Did I mean to visit Kieff, only a few hundred miles to the south, and possessing a magnificent Laura? At all events I was going to the Troitsa: I must not abandon that intention; and if I desired it, he would write me an account of the monastery, and a brief history of St. Sergius, its founder. On my thanking him for his kind offer, he expressed his willingness to supply me also with descriptions of the other holy places; with all of which, as with their history, he was thoroughly familiar. He said he would begin at once, only he had no paper. There were plenty of pens in the house, he told me, and note-paper in abundance; but he liked to write on large sheets, and would be obliged to me if I would send him some.



The next morning I sent Anton Antonovitch my compliments and a quire of letter-paper. In the evening he called to tell me that my paper (the ordinary Bath Post) "*ne valait rien*;" it was too thin. He must have it exceedingly fine, and exceedingly thick. He had never been accustomed to write on paper of any other kind.

What most astonished me in this visit was, that Anton Antonovitch should have called on me at all, for it was a practice he had long given up. Perhaps he was pleased to find a foreigner whom he could interest in the affairs of the Russian Church. Perhaps, after the manner of his countrymen, and in spite of his natural prejudices, he was anxious to show all the attention in his power to a visitor from abroad; and in order to do this it was necessary first of all that he should have "*du beau papier blanc*." He was, at first, somewhat disconcerted at not finding the usual holy picture, or *eikon*, in the eastern corner of the room; but, having made the sign of the cross, he sat down and took some tea: of which, like a great many other Russians, he would drink any quantity at any time of the day.

Before Anton Antonovitch went away, I had some conversation with him on political and literary subjects. He was more than a conservative—he was a retrogressionist. All the progress, according to him, which had taken place in Russia since Peter the Great's time, was



progress in a false direction. "We have foreign wines, foreign silks, foreign ornaments," he said, "and we dress like foreigners" (not Anton Antonovitch, however); "so much so that the peasants look upon us as a different race. There has been a fall, however, in our moral tone: we have more luxuries than formerly, but a man's word is less trustworthy, and our merchants have become cheats." He was not at all sanguine as to the success of Alexander the Second's reforms, and he looked upon Nicolas as the true father of his country; justifying the Crimean war as having been undertaken in defence of the Christians of Turkey against their Mahomedan oppressors. Of modern Russian literature he had no opinion. Poushkin had purified the language—that was his great merit; but as a poet he was not to be compared to Lomonossoff, the father of Russian literature, and the felicitous versifier of the Psalms.

The next morning I sent Anton Antonovitch some paper of creamy white, and as thick as parchment. It appeared that to write on the very best paper was his only luxury. Some men in their poverty will contrive, even if their coat be in tatters, to wear fine linen; others, unable to endure the smell of a tallow candle, to whatever straits they may be reduced, will read by the light of a wax taper; others again, if they go without their dinner, will always stir their tea with a silver spoon. Similarly Anton Antonovitch, with all his rag-



gedness and dirt, was unable to forsake an early acquired habit of scribbling "*sur du beau papier blanc*." Yet he had never any money; and the paper he so particularly affected does not cost less, in Russia, than four or five shillings a quire.

The reader would not take so much interest as I myself did in Anton Antonovitch's literary productions. Suffice it to say, that in due time I received long, and, to me, interesting, accounts of all the holy places in Russia, and especially of the "Laura of the Troitsa."

Of the miraculous birth of St. Sergius, and his three præ-natal cries, symbolic of the "Troitsa," or Trinity; of his divine tuition; of his interview with a bear, who, though starving, respected the holy man, and consented to share his humble meal in a spirit of fairness; of the monastery the saint founded; of his mysterious, inconceivable death; of his uncorrupted body; of his reappearance to the metropolitan Plato in 1812, when Napoleon, terrified by a vision of an innumerable army of black soldiers (*i.e.* monks), on the road to Troitsa, abstained from attacking that great depository of ecclesiastical wealth; and finally, of the miracles performed at his shrine;—I possess particulars written on several "*cahiers de beau papier blanc*," adorned with a portrait of St. Sergius in his fighting costume, and a representation of a stone, which was found in the Oural mountains, and which is, indeed,



one of the greatest curiosities the treasury of the monastery can show.

Towards the end of the year, when every one was giving and going to parties, Anton Antonovitch started suddenly on a pilgrimage. On the evening of the thirty-first of December, just before his departure, he sent me a letter wishing me, according to the Russian expression, "with the new year, new happiness." His letter began thus: "According to the ancient Russian custom, no presents from me (*point de cadeaux de ma part*):" but even if he had not sold his estate, he would not, on principle, have departed from the usage of his ancestors, who, however generous on other festivals, confined themselves on New Year's Day to the interchange of good wishes.

I saw Anton Antonovitch once again, as he was returning from his pilgrimage. It was about nine in the morning, and he had just walked into Moscow from the country. It was miserably cold, and, what was worse, windy; for one may hold that in Russia the wintry wind is really as unkind "as man's ingratitude,"—or his ingratitude must be cutting indeed. Yet Anton Antonovitch wore nothing but his old blue caftan, a pair of trousers which might once have been white, and a pair of shoes which apparently had never been blacked. He had left a pair of goloshes in the corridor, without which he would have lost his feet before he had walked a mile; but he had



nothing to protect his ears or throat. Then I remembered that in his life of St. Sergius the following line occurred: "he never wore a pelisse, nor any kind of fur in winter."

During Anton Antonovitch's absence from Moscow I had visited the Troitsa monastery, and had even remained there three days. He was glad to hear this; and he seemed especially delighted when I told him that I had ascended to the top of the highest tower in the Laura. This he was pleased to regard as a feat of piety. He said he hoped to see me again, as I hoped to see him, wished me good-bye, made the sign of the cross, and went.

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## CHAPTER XV.

## A RUSSIAN WEDDING.

THERE is something in the marriage of a very pretty girl, which, except perhaps to the bridegroom, is not altogether agreeable. The husband of the charming Anna Ivànovna seemed quite to understand this, and he took but little pains to conciliate the friends whom she had invited to her wedding. He, indeed, so far forgot himself as to insist on dancing the first quadrille with her, a privilege which rightly belonged to a personage who, in default of a better name, may be described in English as the bride's best man.

This functionary, chosen by the bride herself, had certain interesting but unimportant duties to perform, such as holding her gloves in church at the critical moment when she uncovers her hands to exchange rings with her future husband ; carrying home for her



the piece of carpet on which she has knelt to receive the nuptial benediction; distributing money in her name to the poor, who say they will pray for her; collecting money for the musicians when the dancing is at an end; with other slender services of a like honourable nature.

There were, moreover, two wax candles to take charge of; symbolical tapers which, alight, signify aspiration, and extinguished, should remind the bride for ever afterwards of certain exhortations addressed to her conjointly with her husband, as, lighted candle in hand, they knelt at the altar. Then there was a crown of massive gold—or perhaps it was gilt; richly adorned with rubies and pearls—which may not have been real; and it was the duty of the bride's special attendant to walk close behind her round the altar, bearing above her head this emblem of unspeakable glory. To do this in a becoming manner, without treading on Anna Ivànovna's white satin dress, and without spoiling her wreath of lilies and orange blossoms, was no easy affair.

The ceremonial of the Orthodox Church required that the crown should be held just above the bride's head. The purity and perfection of Anna Ivànovna's toilette demanded on the other hand that her head-dress should not in the slightest degree be disarranged, and that not even the hem of her garment should be touched. The general public did not appreciate



this respect for the personal appearance of a young girl who had a right on such an occasion to look her best, and who was fully profiting by the privilege. "Any one," they said, "could perceive that the man was a schismatic." He was not fully penetrated with the importance of the work in which he was engaged. He bore himself like a heretic, and carried the crown like an infidel.

Meanwhile the Virgin with the Crown, duly attended by her crown-bearer, made three times, in token of the Trinity, the circuit of the altar. She knelt down with her husband on the before-mentioned piece of carpet, and, being the first to touch it, secured for herself, according to the popular belief on the subject, the direction of the household. She drank, too, with her husband, from a goblet of wine presented to them by the priest, as a sign that she shared with her spouse the cup of eternal love. All these things she did gracefully and composedly. Her face was not without expression, but there was no trace of agitation in her demeanour, except that, in that portion of the service where she had to hold the lighted candle, it could be seen from the flickering of the flame that her hand trembled a little.

The ceremony was full of meaning, full of beauty ; and more than one person present must have fancied that, with such a bride as Anna Ivànovna, he would not mind going through it himself.



When the service was at an end, there was a shawl which the groom of the bride had to carry home. The shawl, like the wax-lights, the crown, the cup, and many other objects, was symbolical; though what it symbolized it would be difficult at this distance of time to remember. But everything meant something; and the shawl had to be claimed and given up with certain forms as an outward indication of some moral and spiritual fact. Altogether there was a good deal of light portage to be done; and the man who did it ought, according to the custom of the country, to have been rewarded by the bride's giving him her hand for the first dance.

Anna Ivànovna, with all her good qualities, was not what the heartless world would have called a young lady. So much the better. Indeed, had she belonged to what the heartless world considers good society, her wedding would have been far less picturesque, and infinitely less symbolical than it in fact was. Nor, if she had been perfectly well brought up, would she have allowed a stranger, however well introduced, to call upon her a few days before her marriage for the purpose of seeing her trousseau. It seemed a very good trousseau, so far as dresses were concerned; which was all she thought fit to exhibit. She had light silks, thick silks, and brocaded silks; besides other dresses, and some handsome furs for winter. But among the dresses, the silks and satins were the



only ones to which she attached any importance. They had all been given to her by her future husband, whose liberality seemed to have made a good impression upon her. But the wedding of Anna Ivànovna was not a typical wedding; and it must not be supposed that it is the custom in any class of Russian society for a young woman to get married without a dowry of some kind. Anna Ivànovna's portion consisted of her own personal graces; and with these she was richly endowed. That, however, as a rule, would not be considered enough in Russia; and Anna Ivànovna's betrothed deserves, perhaps, a word of honourable mention for having shown himself superior to the prejudices among which he had been brought up.

Having shown her dresses and declined to put them on, Anna Ivànovna added that she should wear them all on the night of the wedding; this being, among persons of Anna Ivànovna's class, an essential part of the social celebration. She was quite content with the series of brilliant costumes furnished to her by her future husband, and said in his praise that he refused her nothing. It seemed that he had been in Siberia; not as a political exile, and of course not as a convict, but as a clerk in the administration of the Government gold mines. Such posts are sometimes lucrative. Perhaps his familiarity with gold had bred in him a contempt for the vile metal, and led him to choose a



wife for her own intrinsic worth, and not for the sake of her pecuniary belongings.

Anna Ivànovna was a dressmaker; and invitations to her wedding were issued to a few English friends through a lady for whom she was in the habit of working, and at whose house she had been seen, observed, and admired. The guests were to be at a certain Moscow church by seven in the evening, and we afterwards learnt that we should be expected to go there not only in wedding garments, but in a wedding carriage. Resolved to penetrate the mysteries connected with a Russian wedding, even to their innermost recesses, I went to a yard where carriages deemed suitable to the great events of life could be hired. It was also necessary to choose the horses; for in Russia, to hire a carriage without choosing the horses, is to ensure the worst horses in the stable being sent to you. All this, like the Russian system of bargaining in shops, involves much loss of time, which, to a person not engaged in studying the customs of the country and prepared, therefore, to take the bad with the good, must be very irritating.

The "wedding equipage," as it was called, had an imposing appearance. It was somewhat in the style of the Lord Mayor's coach, but less gorgeous, by reason of the gilding or gold paint having faded. It was the sort of vehicle in which an ex-sheriff would probably have felt at home; and after the usual discus-



sion about terms, the price agreed to for its hire seemed moderate enough. The light chestnut horses selected were declared by the proprietor to have a gay, jubilant bearing quite appropriate to the occasion.

The livery-stable keeper had said something in the course of conversation about a so-called "svacha" with whom he had frequent dealings, and to whom he thought he might be indebted for his new customer. The "svacha" is a sort of matrimonial medium; not a spiritualistic medium, but a simple go-between of the terrestrial world, with few pretensions to a knowledge of the unseen except such as may be derived from cards distributed and combined according to the most approved rules of fortune-telling. Anna Ivànovna had not got engaged through the agency of a "svacha,"—who does not care to have portionless girls on her books, though she will readily interest herself in the fate of any one who is prepared to give her a fee in advance. The "svacha" is something between a witch and a notary; and as she is the means of bringing a good many couples together, and thus causes a great deal of happiness and unhappiness, she would perhaps be justified in giving herself some supernatural airs. Some say that it is not safe to get married without her; and that to those who dispense with her services she behaves like the wicked step-mother of the fairy tales, whom the beautiful Princess forgets to ask to her wedding.



The marriage was to take place on the following day, and it was impossible not to look forward to it with some interest. To see picturesque manners of any kind it is necessary now to go to the East of Europe, where, at a distance of not more than fifteen pounds from London, the traveller may find in Russia the popular customs of the middle ages. The marriage service, too, of the Greek Church is more dramatic, and much fuller of significant details than is the marriage service of the Catholic Church; which is rich and elaborate compared with the marriage service of the Church of England; which is gorgeous compared with the unceremonious form of union adopted by the German and other Protestants, who get married at home; which, finally, is solemn and impressive compared with marriage before a registrar.

In a well-known tale by the poet Poushkin, a Russian officer on his way to his regiment, arrives one evening during a terrible snow-storm outside a little dimly-lighted village church, where, seeing a wedding party at the altar, complete but for the absence of the bridegroom, he hastens forward, and kneeling with downcast face by the side of the trembling bride, gets married in place of the missing man. But the ex-clerk of the Siberian gold mines would not be kept back by a snow-storm, however severe; and the Moscow church would be properly lighted; and Anna Ivànovna had nothing to be afraid of, and would cer-



tainly be able to look her companion at the altar in the face.

At the appointed time the wedding-coach arrived, and its occupants were duly put down at the house of Anna Ivànovna's parents. When the bridegroom came to claim his bride, she fell on her knees before her father and mother, and begged them to forgive whatever offences she might have committed against them. They raised her up, kissed her, offered her bread and salt as signifying the necessities of life, and when she went out did not close the door upon her. Their home was still hers.

What took place at the church has been already indicated, if not fully described. It should have been mentioned, however, that the service was performed with a full choir. No instrumental music of any kind is allowed in the Russian Church: nor is woman suffered to raise her voice. The choir consists of men and boys; and though the Russians possess hymns and religious services by Bortniansky, Lvoff, and other composers, one rarely hears any music in a Russian church, except the simplest responses recited to the accompaniment of the three most familiar chords sustained by four sets of voices. This, one would think, must soon become monotonous. But it somehow does not.

The religious ceremony being at an end, Anna Ivànovna was taken to the house of her husband, where



she was welcomed by his parents, bearing the eternal bread and salt. It often happens to a young Russian wife to have to live with her husband's family, and she seldom likes it. In many a Russian popular song, serious complaint is made of the mother-in-law; and the mother-in-law in these cases is not the mother-in-law of the wife. Anna, however, was not going to live with her husband's parents, and their appearance, in obedience to an old usage, on the threshold of their son's house, with an offering of bread and salt for his bride, was only meant as an expression of good will.

As it is the first duty of a narrator to be accurate, I may as well explain that what has been called the husband's house, was one or more sets of apartments in a house. He seemed for that night to have secured the run of the entire building. But this he had arranged by inviting to the wedding-party all his fellow-lodgers. Two of them were sub-lieutenants of a regiment stationed at Moscow, whose uniforms gave brilliancy to the scene. Another effect, too, was produced by the presence of these gentlemen. The neighbours wondered at seeing them, and, annoyed at not having been asked themselves, went about saying that the retired clerk was entertaining generals. Perhaps the two subalterns were really thought to be generals; for they talked French ostentatiously, and held themselves proudly aloof from the rest of the company.

The wedding-carriage, moreover, produced only too



good an impression. It was said to have held ambassadors.

With ambassadors and generals for guests, it ought not to have surprised any one that Anna Ivànovna's husband should have caused champagne to be handed round. This at all events he did ; and the health was drunk of the newly-married pair. The neighbours were now looking in at the windows, and the sight of the effervescing wine, poured out by servants dressed like gentlemen, did not please them. If to think of happiness that has fled gives pain, to witness rejoicings which are actually going on, but in which one is not allowed to take part, may also be a source of sorrow. The neighbours evidently regretted their exclusion very much indeed ; and when champagne was sent round a second time, some of them began to howl.

Now the bride entered, wearing no longer her wedding dress of white satin, but attired in mauve silk, and looking prettier than ever. Her husband, who, never having been married before, pretended not to know the etiquette of the ceremony, insisted absolutely on dancing with her himself. It was partly, perhaps, for this that he was punished later on.

When the musicians struck up, comments were made, outside, on the expensive character of the band.

After the first quadrille Anna Ivànovna disappeared. Caviar, smoked salmon, pickled mushrooms, and similar



delicacies were now produced, with sherry, madeira, kummel, and various preparations of vodka.

Then another Anna Ivànovna came in, dressed in blue and gold. This was an improvement even on the previous apparition. But it lasted scarcely more than the duration of a quadrille. Refreshments were again offered to the guests.

Soon there was again a rustling of silk, and in came a third—or was this not the fourth?—Anna Ivànovna, clad in pink, and blooming like a rose. Dancing; mysterious disappearance of the bride; and refreshments as before.

The next Anna Ivànovna wore black and silver, and was as beautiful as a moonlight night.

There were more Anna Ivànovnas, and there was a magnificent supper, which called forth ironical cheers from the outside mob, now grown savage. Then some healths were drunk, a collection was made for the musicians, who had already begun to play out of tune, and it was time to go. Festivities, however, were still being kept up, and seemed likely to get more and more animated. The last of the Anna Ivànovnas was in some sort of white, and looked a good deal like an angel.

After going home in the state coach, and dreaming of a whole series of Anna Ivànovnas (and yet there were not seven Anna Ivànovnas, but one Anna Ivànovna), I was awakened next morning by the sound of dismal



chants, and going to the window, saw a very grand funeral procession passing. Besides a number of persons on foot, there were carriages, one of which I recognized as my "wedding equipage" of the night before, with black horses in lieu of the chestnuts.

I went an hour or two afterwards to see the lady through whose good offices I had been invited to Anna Ivànovna's wedding, and there found Anna Ivànovna herself crying, but also—when she was called upon to explain—showing a strong inclination to laugh. The generals, the foreign ambassadors, the champagne, the orchestra, the supper, the brilliant dresses of the bride, had at last proved more than the jealous neighbours could bear. They went to the police, reported that a petty clerk, formerly in the administration of the gold mines of Siberia, was spending thousands of roubles in giving an entertainment, the like of which had never been seen even at the house of the Governor-General, and suggested that he must have been robbing the Government. On this hint the alguazils—seeing ransom money in the immediate future—acted without delay; and for his imprudence in not inviting his neighbours, the husband of Anna Ivànovna was condemned to pass his wedding night in the cell of a prison.

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Edwards, Henry Sutherland,

The Russians at home and the Russians abroad sketches, unpolitical and  
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